‘Gypsies’ and ‘Anarchists’:

Autonomy, solidarity, and sacrifice in Belgrade, Serbia

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Abstract

This is an ethnographic account of a unique experiment in solidarity that united the so-called ‘anarchists’ of a squatted social center in the Karaburma neighborhood of Belgrade, Serbia to the so-called ‘gypsies’ of the nearby informal settlement, Deponija. The experiment took the form of an autonomous kindergarten and youth solidarity program named ‘Koko Lepo’ which has been continually reborn over years of trial and error as well as struggles over the nature of solidarity, autonomy, and equality. Working with an anarchistic anthropological lens of the State as a holistic social agency and a class-struggle framework for understanding race in the capitalist city, this dissertation examines how ‘the anarchists’ and ‘the gypsies’ of this project confronted – or were confronted by – the State and racism and how, through acts of sacrifice and incommensurability, succeeded or failed to overcome the “inimical profane” of these forces in the creation of a new “sacred politics” of solidarity and autonomy on their own terms. This study entails an interpretive and power-centered analysis of the InexFilm squat and the mobilization of symbolic violence to create political identities therein, a political economic account of the Deponija slum and an argument for the political agency of racialized laboring and policed subjects, and finally an interpretive and historical account of the use and evolution of concrete values within the Koko Lepo collective. Methodologically, this work is an argument for the inclusion of direct action into ethnographic research and the experimental basis of solidarity.

Acknowledgments

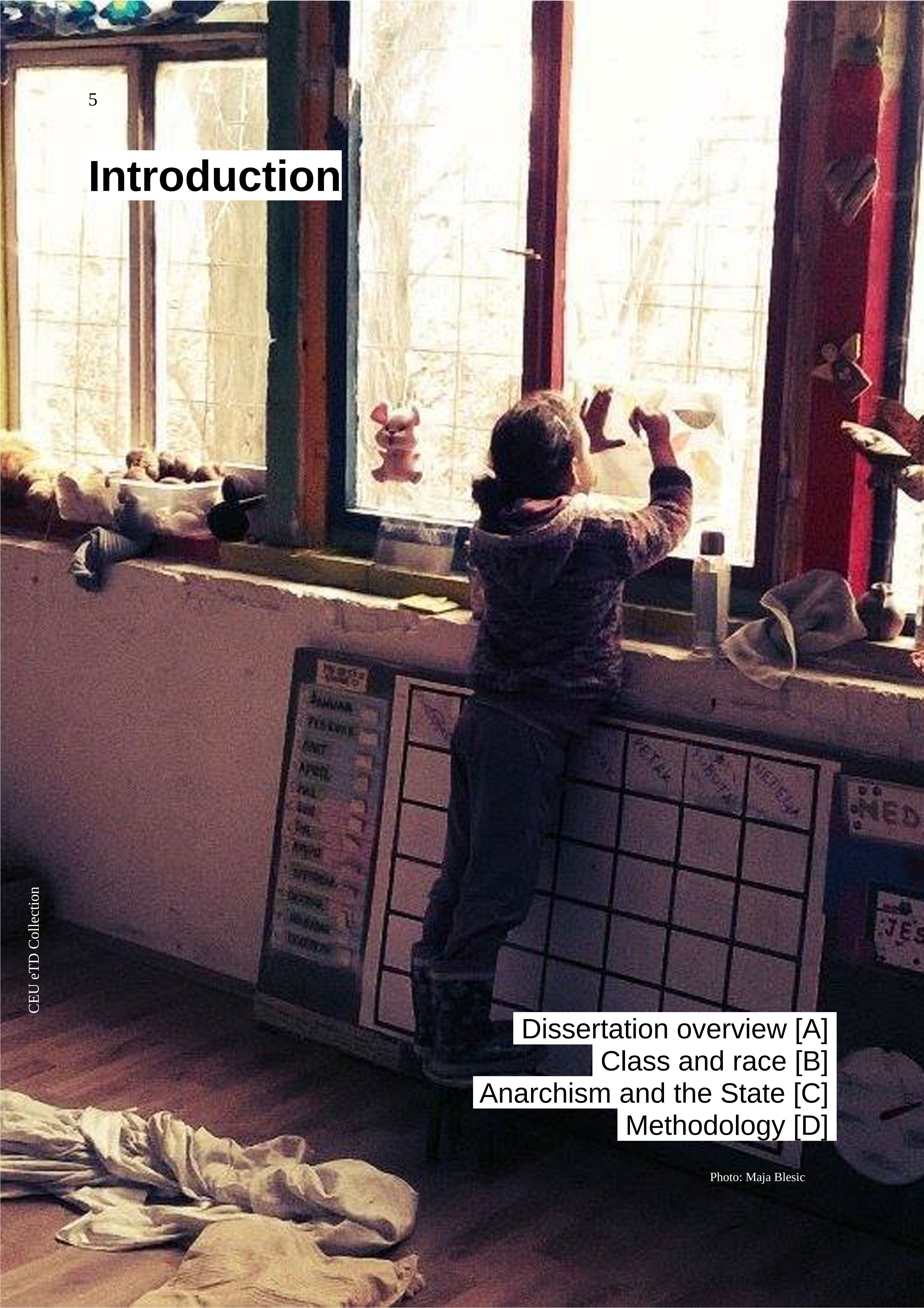
I am most indebted to my fellow collective members in Koko Lepo and the families of the Deponija mahala. The richness of our collective experiment could produce mountains of literature, and might still, but more importantly it created precedents and joined the global struggle for equality, solidarity, and autonomy with concrete interventions. While I have anonymized all of you in this writing, I hope you know how profoundly you have changed my epistemology and my life. The work is far from over. I would especially like to thank Sait and Emrana from Deponija, however, for patiently showing me the ropes and consistently filling-in the gaps of my understanding of life in the settlement, as well as properly scolding me when we pushed too hard in the wrong places.

Of course, I am also grateful for the mentoring of my supervisor, Don Kalb. While your influence on this work may be less than obvious in places to my readers, it is in fact the foundations upon which my understanding of class struggle has been constructed. I couldn't have asked for a better mentor, one that let me sail freely out into the ocean of social experimentation, yet kept the lighthouse burning for me to find my way home. You trusted me enough to take great risks and make profound shifts in my course of study that other doctoral students would consider unrequitable luxuries. Thanks to this trust, I have been free to construct an anthropology that can intervene directly into the issues and problems that have defined our intellectual and moral bearings. I thank you for making this worker from Texas feel understood and capable in Academia.

I thank my parents, Fred and Candy, for passing on to me their intellects, love, and belief in a world larger than our own from which both my brother, Bryan, and I have grown. I thank Relja Knežević for inviting me to share his world and offer me a life in Belgrade that matters while constantly challenging me to rethink and reformulate my activism. I thank Andrej Grubačić for his comradeship and intellectual influence on my work as both an anarchist and anthropologist. I thank my band, Justin, Noemi, and Endre, for melding my work with ours and taking an active and supportive interest in my activities here. I thank Bojan Đurišić for being my *cimer*, comrade, and friend as well as helping me find work to keep starvation from interrupting my research. I thank the teachers of the Tom and Ema School of English for their support and understanding. I thank Stefan Bakić for being a knowledgeable and critical interlocutor and a good friend. I thank Marko Ferenc for being an amazing fellow traveler and supporting me when I needed it most. I thank Tanja Anđić for her editorial prowess and critical gaze on my writing. I thank Milan Škobić for his intellectual honesty and for the challenging debates he has always been willing to join me in during our tenure at Inex. On that note, I am indebted to the support of my dear comrades past and present from the Infoshop Furija as well as many others at the InexFilm squat and those who have passed through it, each shaping my understanding of the Other World of Experienced Reversed in new ways.

Finally, there are two people whose impact on my life has proven inestimable. I am humbled by the support, love, and comradeship of Natalija Đorđević, whose belief in me continues to fuel my desire to help create a better world. And to my eternal comrade, Natalia Buier, whose sharp edges and soft heart will forever prefigure my own politics, I offer more than gratitude, but a promise to continue our work and keep the bastards scared.

Introduction



Dissertation overview [A]
Class and race [B]
Anarchism and the State [C]
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Photo: Maja Blesic

[i/A] Dissertation overview

‘Gypsies’ and ‘Anarchists’: solidarity, autonomy, and the inimical profane in Belgrade

This text is a critical and analytical record of struggles that took place in Belgrade, Serbia between the years 2013-2016 as part of the long and arduous attempt to reconcile two related but antagonistic fields through a single collective organ, an autonomous mutual aid project called the ‘Koko Lepo’ kindergarten and youth solidarity collective. The first of the fields is the now-defunct InexFilm squat, a heterotopic space of intentional exile where 'cultural' and 'social' users of an abandoned industrial space managed a five-year experiment in alternative and counter-cultural activities. The second is the informal Roma collector settlement, Deponija – literally translatable as “Dump”, “Depot”, or “Landfill” – where decades of illegibility and marginalization have accumulated into a disjointed society of survival through a paradoxical mixture of autonomy, mutual aid and mutual exploitation. Koko Lepo brought these fields together over three limping years of misunderstandings, counter-hegemonic struggles, and almost catastrophic failures. The end result of this shaky tripartite alliance is a unique and widely celebrated experiment in autonomous solidarity of which I have had the great luck to be a part of from nearly its inception. What follows is my attempt to make this experience useful both for critical anthropologists working in the academy as well as those fighting in the trenches of history.

In this introduction, I will establish a theoretical framework from which to engage with my fieldwork in Koko Lepo. To that end, I will integrate a materialist concept of race into the ongoing project of the anthropology of class. This should dispel both the culturalist obsessions of the ‘Romology’ school of ethnology as well as problematize a nationalist framework for approaching the “gypsy problem” in Serbia by offering an alternative account of the structurally racist deprivation of ‘gypsy’ workers that is attentive to global processes of capitalism and local expressions of the police effect of the State: the critical junction of ‘race’. Next, I will promote an anthropological theory of the State by which readers will be equipped to appreciate the anarchistic mode of intervention embodied by the Koko Lepo collective as well as the stakes of struggle internal to the InexFilm squat. One should leave this introduction with the ability to see the State as a holistic agency reproduced between citizens, not merely an institutional apparatus of repression and governance that sits atop them. A truly emic sensitivity to the struggles outlined in this dissertation is dependent upon this framework of class struggle and state power.

The first chapter of this work describes the squatted social and cultural center ‘InexFilm’ in which most of my data was gathered. I introduce the relevance of an interpretive conception of sacrifice to the study of 'exilic spaces' as critically engaged heterotopias. I then show how the organization of InexFilm was itself inscribed onto power and I dwell on the role that “immanent violence” played in the formation of political sodalities therein. I overlay the organizational makeup of InexFilm on to Eric Wolf's “Facing power” (1990), particularly the structural and tactical, arguing that both a materialist approach to property and an interpretive anthropological approach to shared symbols are necessary to understand the struggles of the squat. The reader will be offered an unusual usage of the concept of ‘sacrifice’ as a heuristic point of entry for political anthropology as well as the concept of the ‘inimical profane’ which will return throughout the dissertation.

In the next chapter, I introduce the informal Roma slum of Deponija as a key ethnographic field site and a position from which to engage in an ethnographically bound critique of the capitalist world system. After a general historical overview of Roma slums and collecting labor in Belgrade, I present the political economic framework for understanding that history while opening the topic of race and gender within. Again, I return to interpretive anthropology, specifically the work of Mary Douglas, to account for the dual process of ghettoization and racialization in the field of collecting labor and the usefulness of anti-ciganism, anti-gypsy racism, in the maintenance of an invisible neoliberalism in Belgrade. I again invoke the logic of sacrifice, claiming that 'the gypsy' manages to absorb the sins of capitalism by sublimating them under racialist rubrics while creating a super-exploitable source of labor for the “reconversion of the excretions of production”, in Marx’s terminology. While this approach will appear, at first blush, to echo more traditional functionalist anthropological approaches with a Marxian upgrade, I maintain a constant focus on contingency and evolution as well as reproduction in the making and remaking of the gypsy as a racialized axis of inequality. Finally, I trepidatiously propose a novel understanding of an agentive gypsyism, here called ‘*ciganizam’*, that can respond radically and critically to anti-ciganism in ways that fundamentally destabilize the terrain of racism by, in part, attacking its foundations in ‘Control’ – the holistic agency of the State.

The third chapter explains the collective that bridged the Inex squat to the Deponija slum: Koko Lepo. I present my work both in and on Koko Lepo from a primarily critical-interpretive perspective again relying on the anthropology of sacrifice as well as the problem of incommensurability as understood by Caroline Humphrey. Through a combination of interpretive anthropology, anarchist sensitivities, and episodic casing I establish the Koko Lepo collective as a social laboratory engaged in constant acts of experimentation. This chapter presents ‘values’ from an anarchistic lens as concrete acts and relations that prefigure new worlds through networking and direct action even as they condemn and sever the old one. I conclude with an extended account of the failure of the InexFilm ‘free shop’ experiment which had a profound impact on how Koko Lepo understands itself in contradistinction to ideas of charity and I argue that communism cannot be produced from hierarchical bases.

This work contains several peculiarities that should be commented on from the outset. Firstly, this is a “multi-sited” ethnography at its core and, despite the advantages of this approach, contains within it certain necessary shortcomings, namely the over-privileging of the field site as discrete conceptual enclosures and the occasional loss of “thickness” in the process of cultural interpretation. The first of these faults I can only answer by emphasizing the heterotopic qualities of my fields; these sites are made discrete just as much by the internal agency of those inhabiting them as by the external forces that have shaped them. Connected as they are to each other and to the world, they nonetheless are created as sites by their users and thus cannot be treated as discontinuous sites bound by identity, as Ghassan Hage (2005) proposes in his critique of George Marcus (1995). On problem of 'thickness', I concede that a more classical interpretive approach to culture is undertaken far more seriously in my chapters on InexFilm and Koko Lepo than in those of *Deponija* and the '*ciganist* situation' and that this is due in no small part to my proximity to those two sites as opposed to *Deponija*, but I would argue that the end result has been a welcome destabilizing effect on all fronts. Here, I am able to offer contemporary *avant garde* acts of radical organizing and 'squatting' as more 'traditional' anthropological fare by subjecting them to a thick interpretive gaze, while simultaneously interrogating the more traditional concerns of Roma ethnography as political economic subjects embroiled in a condition of class struggle. Limitations in multi-sited work can easily become advantages when processed through the critical lens afforded the anthropology of class.

The central thread of this study is ‘profanity’ and the creation of political subjects. Despite my allegiance to the anarchist intervention in militant anthropology, I depart substantially from the leading voice in this milieu, David Graeber, in several ways. By centering class struggle as the decisive motor of sociocultural conflict, I argue strongly against the ideas of mass politics and “ideological diversity” so central to Graeber’s anthropology of anarchism. Instead, I propose a serious consideration of symbolic violence, condemnation, and incommensurability in the creation of, in Graeber and Stevphen Shukaitis’ words “archipelagos of rupture” (2007:32), a concept I do not believe has been satisfactorily established in their work. Their commitment to “discontinuous lines of flight” (Shukaitis 2009:20) and a “diversity of perspectives” (Graeber 2007:323) precludes them from a more nuanced understanding of the violence, both genuine and symbolic, that is foundational to the creation of discrete political identities. Rejection, condemnation, even voluntary purges as are as much a part of anarchist collectivity as they are the *avant garde*-ism to which they consider themselves the antitheses. This is the inevitable result of an expanded definition of class as a relation of hierarchical exploitation that adopts many faces, a definition simultaneously anthropological and endemic to anarchism itself. I will argue, in the case of the former, for a class struggle-centered anthropology that can see both the racism of Deponija and the petty property struggles in Inex as expressions of the class relation. In the case of the latter, we will need to build an epistemological basis for the anarchist approach to power at the heart of Koko Lepo and their anarchist allies in the squat.

[i/B] Class and race

Class-struggle and anthropology

There is something of a heroic narrative in the anthropology of class, a narrative whose value is readily apparent each time I am asked to introduce it to undergraduate students just joining the field. Its protagonist is a captive one, locked away behind culturalist particularism, community obsessions, institutional red-scares, postmodernist textual quicksand, and political disengagement (Kalb 2005, Roseberry 1988, Kashmir and Carbonella 2014). Building on the anthropology of power, exemplified by the work of Eric Wolf in the 1980s, as well as the parallel rise of world systems theory and the ethnographic turn in sociological approaches to labor and power in Michael Burawoy's “global ethnography”, the new anthropology of labor and class breaks through the myopic relativistic determinism of culture-centered anthropology to uncover the critical junctions uniting local processes of identification to the global structures of exploitation. The anthropology of class dynamizes the anthropological mission by beginning with “the multiplication of the proletariat”, in Engels' words (1968), and elucidating the creative capacity of the class relation to produce a staggering array of expressions and, possibly, wedges from which actors can leverage their own struggles against the ominous historical tides of capitalism. Culture is not lost in this anthropology, but is revitalized as space of contestation, power, and connectivity to global processes.

On the historical materialist side of these efforts, these studies are heir to E.P. Thompson's (1968) classic account of the English working class which expanded our awareness of class struggle from the synchronic exigencies of industrial production to the historical momentum and cultural productions of integrated social actors and their processes of social reproduction. Such anthropological treatments of class have largely supported what we might call a Polanyian thesis; the micro-historical integration of class and community with connections between regional social transformations and a globally expanding capitalist market that superimposes new reified social relations onto “the ruins of older classes” (Polanyi 1944:102). The successful mobilization of a class, proletarian or otherwise, hinges on its level of integration into the whole of society (100). Gerald Sider's (1986) account of the global political-economic roots of a Newfoundland fishing village, for instance, builds on the Marxian definition of property as a definite social relation through a Polanyian and Thompsonian lens by arguing that culture is also a social relation and can, just like property, be mobilized dynamically throughout history to forward class interests. Similar archival ethnographies like those of Don Kalb (1997) and Ann Laura Stoler (1992) explaining class formation in Dutch factory towns and via colonial categorizations and labor controls of Sumatran plantations respectively have underlined the necessity of holistic and multi-layered anthropological analysis with a world-historical perspective to the study of class in capitalism. Far from neglecting “real people doing real things” as Sherry Ortner once accused of “capitalism-centered” political-economic anthropology (Ortner 1984 cited in Roseberry 1988), these studies show how the necessarily expanding and exploitative logic of capitalist production is both overtaken and resisted by 'the local' which is itself reshaped in the process. While Eric Wolf (1982) accomplished this by showing how supposedly 'traditional' society was shaped in the time of early global capitalist accumulation, Kajsa and Jonathan Friedman (2008) has provided the contemporary analogue explaining how the very category of 'tradition' is a by-product of modernity, itself understood to be the “cultural field of commodity capitalism” (9). This school of thought has been instrumental in cutting through the ‘cultural’ claims of apolitical users in the squat in chapter one and uncovering the material relations of struggle therein. Politics become both real and bound to the structural dynamics of the space, thus my reliance on Wolf.

Of course, at the heart of struggle is the burning question of political agency. While in chapter one I show how people are created as political subjects, in chapter two I argue for a theory of agency of political objects. Recently, Natalia Buier's doctoral dissertation, *Time is not a Military Rank*, building largely on the theoretical framework of Susan Narotzky, has advanced the historical materialist mission by centralizing the production and reproduction of memory in the formulation of overtly class-based critiques on the part of the CNT train worker's union in Madrid against the insurmountable nationalist trajectory of the neoliberal restructuring of the Spanish rails (2016). Her narrative, securely situated in the anthropology of class, gives a critical voice to her subjects as more than interpellated dupes caught up in invisible global tides, but cognizant fighters in a losing battle. Buier's return to agency, often lost in the anthropology of class under an overriding interest in the global's shaping of the local, was inspirational in my own struggles with the idea of ‘gypsy agency’, opening a narrow passage for a holistic critical rejection on the part of capitalist Belgrade’s racialized subjects.

The anthropology of class has provided a welcome materialist grounding to the study of nationalism, a significant underpinning in our approach to “ciganism” in chapter two. This compliments the techno-historical approach of Benedict Anderson as a fiction tied to world-historical developments (1983), while deeply problematizing and challenging the political scientific approaches of Rogers Brubaker, who endows it with a world-building power all of its own (1996:4). For instance, Theodora Vetta's (2012) ethnographic work in the Vojvodina region of Serbia has already shown how apparently nationalistic political affiliations can in fact be read better as a locally negotiated relationship between extant sociopolitical structures and the changing material realities of the communities which intersect with them than as simple political expressions of deep-seeded ideologies. Her work is part of an ongoing anthropological campaign to account for working-class nationalism in Europe, spearheaded in part by Don Kalb, whose recent work in Poland has bolstered the theoretical groundwork for ethnographically interrogating sociopolitical categories with grounded intersections of global processes of value extraction and local forms of social reproduction. For Kalb, “hidden and entangled histories of disenfranchisement, dispossession, and resistance” produced by the rapid and confusing processes of neoliberal accumulation in Poland ave allowed opportunistic nationalist populism to translate class struggle into the struggle of the 'nation' (2014:280). Chapter two of this dissertation continues along this path by showing how global forces and local histories are implicated in both the creation of the Serbian *beograđanin*, citizen of Belgrade, and the laboring ‘gypsy’ as political subjects in the crucible of class struggle, though I expand the idea of class, in proper anarchist fashion, into the reproduction of the State as a holistic agent of control.

Despite adopting a peripheral role in my narrative, some words about my approach to neoliberalism are in order; it is undeniably the most important politic of accumulation in Serbia today, though it operates very much in the background of this dissertation as I focus more on microcosmic practices and relationships due to immediacy and intimacy of ‘direct action’ in my ethnographic intervention. Kashmir and Carbonella's edited edition *Blood and Fire* cast neoliberal capitalism in an active structuring role that I accept as primal to my own work, the post-fordist regime of flexible accumulation by dispossession coupled by the evisceration of State-sponsored social protections. Much of my thinking about the anthropology of neoliberalism can be framed by one particularly salient debate in the journal Focaal (2008). This debate is guided primarily by a shift from the question “Where is it?” to “Where isn't it?” (Clarke 2008). John Clarke fears that beginning any analysis with a pre-formed Foucaultian concept of neoliberalism glosses too easily over radically different strategies of rule, relation, and social reproduction whose variations result in substantial sociocultural and political diversity (159). In response to this perceived extrication of neoliberalism from the anthropologist's heuristic tool belt, Neil Smith (2008), echoing David Harvey (2005), demands that we view neoliberalism as a class project and given the fundamental structural unity of global capitalism, neoliberalism's heuristic potential lies in its capacity to undermine tendencies towards what might be called 'methodological etatism' in critical analysis. My work will both advance and problematize this discourse by handling neoliberalism, not from the direction of the 'ruling class' nor its effectiveness a theoretical inevitability, but from the direction of those struggling against it, and allow the critical junctions revealed by that struggle to draw the contours of neoliberalism ethnographically. Thus, with a very important exception in my chapter on *Deponija*, I don't really take it up as a special agent in my ethnographic narrative, leaving it a Goffman-ian frame instead of a key actor, by which the principle players in this narrative situate their own practices, even without a refined description or critique of neoliberalism itself.

While making up only about half of the dissertation, the most intriguing problem for class-oriented anthropology must be that of the ‘gypsy’. It is here that I wish to ‘expand class’ to new limits by offering a view of race that is intrinsic to labor and proletarianization, as well as a reactionary proletarian agent analogous, though not identical, to the Marxian “working class”. Before a more general discussion on race, however, I wish to establish myself in the general field of the anthropology of Roma, ‘gypsies’, and travellers.

Roma, gypsy, or proletariat?

As an anthropologist of class-struggle, I never intended to enter the domain of Roma studies. Writings on 'the Roma' as an ethnic group had always seemed to me an ethnological dead-end that offered, at best, a critique of marginality and, at worst, a Romanticized call for multiculturalism or a new nationalism. My research interests have always been the struggle, the fight back against vast macro structural forces as they manifest themselves in particular locations; thus, the enduring victim-hood of the Roma, while tragic and engrossing in its own right, seemed well outside my anthropological foci. I was pleasantly surprised to discover how very wrong this perception was. Once inundated with the immediate and practical need to anthropologize my growing number of acquaintances in *Deponija* the question of the Roma and the ‘gypsy' became paramount, occupying numerous debates within the Koko Lepo collective in which I found myself working. As I went about gathering data and posing questions, it became impossible to ignore a nagging *problematique* that cast a shadow over my entire intellectual project: who are these people? Would ethnographies produced in the UK, or Greece, or Romania get me any closer to understanding the relations and attitudes in the *Deponija* settlement in Belgrade today? Was I studying 'the gypsies' of Leo Luccassen, a largely legal and discursively constructed social precariat, or 'the Roma' of Ian Hancock, an ethno-national diaspora with diverse local expressions? Certainly, numerous parallels became apparent in these studies and my own: linguistic overlaps across borders, shared origin myths in various countries, a basic phenotypic conformity, similar experiences with stereotyping and discrimination, similar discourses for approaching the issue in the public sphere, etc.. These parallels exposed more questions for me than answers, however. Why not, for instance, view the residents of *Deponija* simply as Yugoslav refugees and their present condition as the effect of warfare and statelessness? What disservice do I do their unique experience with such historical forces, not to mention the basket of deprivation associated with post-socialist minorities, if I attempt to explain it while utilizing ethnographic data accumulated in settlements in the UK? Or perhaps the residents of *Deponija* are not ‘gypsies’ at all, but ghettoized urban collectors of the excretions of production, and as such would have very little in common with the Roma cultural workers who today dominate civil society discourse on the subject.

Having opened the topic up after my experience in Belgrade developed into an organic research program, several anthropological themes became apparent in the literature. Indeed, the image of a more-or-less cohesive ethno-linguistic group in a suspended condition of diaspora remains a prominent feature in the field (Hancock 1988, Theodosiou 2011, Acton 1974, Barany 2001). This theme, tied very closely to relations of advocacy and the management of Roma identity in the public sphere, is interested in reproducing a narrative of shared historical experience, often including a basic hagiography (Kenrick 2007) and an almost Old Testament account of a people who passed from slavery and exile into a nationalist liberation movement and organized public voice (Hancock 1988, Ackovic 2008). In this narrative, the ongoing persecution of the Roma appears a primitive holdover of ancient times, committed by those with little understanding of the Roma nation who have not yet joined the modern world in the multicultural project. There is an attractive and effective inversion of barbarity here, claims to the savagery and “asociality” of the Roma become evidence of the those very properties within the European. This displacement of the savage, reminiscent of Trouillot's musings on “the savage slot”, certainly accomplish a classic mission in anthropology, yet at what cost?

The legal/discursive approach to “gypsies”, by contrast, endows the State with a generative agency in the creation and reproduction of gypsies. Leo Lucassen (1998), for instance, goes so far as to completely reject any ethnic or national pretensions in gypsy-ness and locates their invention entirely in the police projects of early-modern Europe, a point of entry I also take up in this dissertation, though without his hardline stance against Roma ethnic subjectivity. Judith Okely, the pioneer in ethnographic work with gypsies in the UK and an enduring voice of advocacy, seeks a middle-ground between the translocal logics of insider/outsider ideas of purity in the internally constructed identities of gypsy Travellers in England while still presenting them as a social and legal precariat (2014). Okely's career relationship with both Travellers and State authorities is the source of numerous indispensable texts in gypsy studies as well as extremely personal and challenging problematics for ethnographers in general. Sociologist Thomas Acton, Okely's collegiate rival in the question of ethnicity, also offered a powerful study on the role of the State in legal construction of the gypsy, yet he remained unwilling throughout his career to abandon the search for origins nor the concrete ethnic constitution of the Roma as a people. Both are in debt, however, to Fredrik Barths' theorization of ethnicity as a process of boundary-making, and gypsy/non-gypsy relations are paramount in the process of identification in their works, as they continue to be today.

It is worth noting here that disproportionate share of this discourse took place in England in the 1960s, 70s and 80s where experiments tying political representation to gypsy identity followed on the heels of the First World Romani Congress in 1974. Grattam Puxon's ascendance in the English gypsy-political scene via 'The Gypsy Coucil' induced another source of pressure for anthropologists to provide answers for the question of the day: what is a gypsy? (Okely 1997:224). Puxon, a white Englishman who married a Balkan gyspy woman, went as far as to suggest the founding of a 'Romanestan' independent state in the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia (Ibid.). Okely's excellent essay “Some political consequences of theories of gypsy ethnicity: The place of the intellectual” (Ibid.), convincingly establishes a direct linkage with the way 'Gorgio' (non-gypsy) intellectuals and activists tie Romalogical theories to political projects. Okely's long-time problematization and suspicion about the Indian-origin thesis has only been bolstered by the conflicts it invited with other intellectuals, revealing “nothing new” in the way of evidence to support the Indian origin story but plenty of data regarding the political climate surrounding the gypsy issue in the moment. I myself can attest to the Indian-myth as far more relevant to Serbs than to our friends in the settlement. It's prominence in the literature has always struck me as a bit of a mystery; why, I had wondered, did the origin myth take such a central place considering the ongoing and evolving strategies of identification, difference, and assimilation practiced on the ground? Of course, given the temporal and geographic epicenter of the myth, 1970s England, at a time where the tactics of black nationalism in the US found themselves increasingly promoted among gypsy advocates in England, it should be no surprise to see an active racialization and nationalism in the general discourse. Okely stands out from her peers at the time as one of the few voices who broke with that logic and brought it under suspicion and turned, instead, to the interplay of internal group indentification processes and socio-legal marginalization and oppression. My ethnographic work certainly supports her reservations.

Since the golden era of gypsy anthropology and intellectual activism described above, an era which survived well into the 1990s, doctoral students in numerous fields appear to have launched a concerted effort to localize gypsies as socioculturally situated ethnographic subjects in diverse fields sites around Europe (Stewart 2013). These studies rather transcend the question of origins, an issue about which Stewart claims “Gypsies have appeared supremely unruffled” (2002:86), excluding, of course, the resurgence of identity claims as 'Egyptians' in the southern Balkans in that period (Cvoric 2006). While these studies have provided a renewed interest in processes of identification, as opposed to efforts to account for an empirically accessible shared identity among the European Roma, these have tended more towards an intersectionalist approach to power, nodes of identity intersecting in experience, as opposed to one of class-struggle. For example, Brigid O'Keeffe's engrossing study of Gypsy identity formation in the early Soviet Union narrates the creation of a “Gypsy proletarian” as an identity struggle mirroring the political divisions elucidated in Acton's classic study of UK gypsy politics a well as Pissaro's tragic account of such divisions in Nazi-occupied Belgrade; settled and 'productive' gypsies rabidly distanced themselves from 'nomadic' gypsies, a process which says far more about the Soviet imagination about the proletarian than about the proletarian character of the Soviet gypsy. The same process which produced bourgeois gypsies in the UK produced Aryan gypsies in Nazi Serbia and proletarian gypsies in 1930's Moscow; a process of severing and social dispossession that, while necessitated by State interventions, cannot be placed solely on the shoulders of the State itself. Internally produced boundary making processes, including collaboration with non-Roma, appear to support both the ethnogenisis models of Barthes-inspired Roma ethnography as well as the constructivist models of State-centered historical scholarship. It is here that relational studies of gypsy settlements become particularly useful and allow yet another transcendence from the ethnological mire of Roma studies with the idea of misrecognition.

Ada Engebrigtsen's (2007) prolonged ethnographic work in Transylvania posits a relational identification process of “gypsiness”. She discovers in the relationship between a Roma settlement and a Romanian village which hosts it a shared practice of mutual misrecognition. On the part of the village, the Roma settelment dwellers produce in the Gypsy a lurid counter to the ordered and ordering norms of civilization, whereas the Roma, under a curtain of secrecy, identified by Michael Stewart as a recurring theme in gypsy ethnography (2012), obtain a certain level of autonomy that has broad social implications. Both Stewart, working in Hungary, and Williams, working in Paris and New York, have hypothesized a relational constructivism as part of the process of gypsiness, but only Engebrigtsen has linked the process to the production of autonomy. I wish to carry this process even further in my own class-struggle-oriented analysis of gypsiness with the idea of “*ciganist* situations”, moments where gypsiness is established intending to reproduce certain aspects of the global capitalist order, yet paradoxically providing a wedge for a subaltern rejection of that very order. I propose, then, a gypsiness which undermines the conditions of its own production, echoing the fabled historic mission of the proletariat. Unlike the teleological Marxist narrative, however, I establish this process as one of repeated and contingent situations that bring multiple scales of power together in single confrontational moments. Thus, understanding “*ciganism*” necessitates approaching these moments of identification and rejection as “critical junctions” of capitalism, hence providing a novel point of entry for the anthropology of class into the field of Roma ethnography.

To summarize my own intervention into the dense literary substrata of gypsy anthropology, I can identify three distinct points of entry: firstly, my work provides support to Okely's calls to look beyond the search for origins and, indeed, hold such attempts with suspicion as a potential collaborator of Statist nationalism. Secondly, I advance the relational conception of 'gypsy' identity, along with Okely, Stewart, Engebrigtsen, and Williams, while distinguishing my analysis as one which puts primacy on the hierarchical and exploitative foundations of that relation, thus, the class character of it. Finally, I invert Lucassen's State constructivist model of gypsy identity by establishing that it is in fact this very act of construction which provides the basis of sodality. I propose a holistic conception of state agency that produces a critical agency of total rejection in the gypsy subject. The problem of the gypsy is not its endurance despite the lack of a State in its name (Stewart 2002:84) but rather the endurance of the capitalist State itself despite its proliferation of potentially disruptive agencies. *Ciganism* is then seen as a parallel process, if not entirely compatible, with “small-'a' anarchism” and thus best accessed though an anthropological lens that takes seriously the social claims of anarchism and the materiality of class struggle. Anti-ciganism is unquestionably a face of racism, but how we approach the problem of race is key to understanding the struggle against it.

Race, class struggle, and Control

The issue of race is the issue of class and control. As class is a relation, one defined by an integrated yet opposed agencies, race is but one of the innumerable shifting and evolving expressions of this relation. As with class, those analyses which present race as a problem of representation between discrete groups of people neuter the analytical potential of 'race' as a critical junction of class struggle. A holistic view of the race-moment of class struggle must include at a minimum the racialization of space, labor, and the employment of signs to these ends. Moreover, as the arbiter and exploiter of class struggle respectively, etatism and capitalism must suffer a structural interrogation from the position of racialization as prime pathways of its reproduction and beneficiaries of its effects.

Before we get underway, however, some house-cleaning is in order. The subject of race is, obviously, one of endless complexity, but it tends to flow around a relatively limited number of consistent conceptual eddies. I shall introduce the extremely popular framework of 'intersectionality' to act as a representative of an identity-focused heuristic which I see in irreconcilable opposition to a relational view of race and class. To expand this opposition beyond the intersectional critique, Loic Wacquant's polemic against Ann Laura Stoler will be used to exemplify the fallacy of naturalization in the concept of racialized power, as will Gregory Meyerson's criticism of Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism*. Throughout, Theodor W. Allen's *The Invention of the White Race* and Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Reddiker's *The Many Headed Hydra* will loom overhead as exemplary models for a class relation approach to race in the field of history. Finally, we will return to Stoler's critical examination of Focault's arguments about race and begin to formulate a novel argument uniting race and control as co-constructed manifestations of class struggle. This shall be explained by a brief return to the axiomatic Marxian concept of 'socially necessary labor time' and its heuristic potential to the problem of race.

Beyond intersectionality

One particularly persistent and potentially pernicious perspective on race comes from the popular positions of the intersectionality camp. It is not my intention to trivialize the substantial contribution intersectional approaches have made to the study of race, but as a political approach which evolved from the study of law, it cannot help but reproduce certain fundamental shortcomings that a more critical approach might avoid. Kimberle Crenshaw's seminal article on the subject is essentially a letter of entreaty calling on official actors to reform the State; she sees the democratic facade collapsing but, instead of letting the foundations of its construction bare themselves, she finds herself busily filling cracks in the plaster. Crenshaw astutely identifies the shortcomings of activists and legal actors working within the State system to account for the diverse intersecting moments of disempowerment which she sees as “multiple grounds of identity” (1991:1241). Despite its resonance, this letter is nonetheless directed to policy makers within a capitalist world where class is but one of several other identity points in a person's private matrix. Any approach which views class as an issue of identity cannot but see the problem of disempowerment as anything but disenfranchisement. In this view, every person is a little parliament in which their various identity claims are represented internally as well as being parliamentarians themselves in some grand imaginary chambers. This is the liberal dream of governance run amok. In this dream “White” is but one more representative in the same ethereal parliament as “Black” and at worst is merely the recipient of over-representation. Eve Mitchell's excellent critique of intersectional theory sums up this point quite elegantly,

> Since identity politics, and therefore intersectionality theory, are a bourgeois politics, the possibilities for struggle are also bourgeois. Identity politics reproduces the appearance of an alienated individual under capitalism and so struggle takes the form of equality among groups at best, or individualized forms of struggle at worse (2013).

Indeed, the basis upon which intersectionality was built was as a reaction to the uneven representative power of white, heterosexual women in public feminism and that of heterosexual men in civil rights discourse. By contrast, a relational approach can imagine no such parliament nor does it mistake representation for power; the public sphere is no place for class struggle. At worst, the intersectional perspective reifies and exports the terms endemic to the ideology of capitalism and statism, creates fields of authority out of them, and then offers them as sources of political capital for agents willing to exploit/represent them in the public sphere. It does not reduce the domination of representatives over a diverse population, merely expands and diversifies the available fields in which representatives may develop political capital –“appropriating the other through assimilation” in Spivak's words (1988:104).

‘White’ and ‘Black’, ‘*beograđanin*’ and ‘Gypsy’, are no more autonomous as identities than “Owner” and “Worker”; I would argue that the value of these categorizations comes not from their ability to represent unique experiences, but their ability to critically approach a relational structure. While intersectionalists see a multiplicity of oppression, they tend to see their expression in hegemonic discourse, disciplinary apparatuses, interpersonal relationships, and social structures, as discrete “domains of power” instead of a co-constitutive capitalist system (Collins 2000:276). In response, we might take George Meyerson's reminder that “oppression is multiple and intersecting but its causes are not” (2001).

We must cease writing letters to, in Bourdieu's nomenclature, the “authorized representatives” of struggle, and start writing to the those potential saboteurs waiting, wrench in hand, to dismantle the machinery of our representative's authority.

Against “racial domination”

Loic Wacquant wants us to work racism out of social inquiry, to “retire it from the armamentarium of the social sciences” (1997:230). Since my entire thesis about state power and the popularization of state functions through cultural hegemony largely rests on the idea of racism as indispensable for control and deeply experienced by my research participants, this pronouncement rings exceptionally hollow. He worries that the term, in its common usage as well as in academic parlance, has lost its heuristic potential and serves only to further the “logic of trial” through which social scientists scramble over each other in a mad dash towards exculpation of themselves by condemnation of another (225). Wacquant blames the “uncontrolled conflation of social and sociological explanations of race” as well as an eagerness to discard local experiences of racial domination in favor of a totalizing “quest for origins” that seeks “culprits” rather than “mechanisms” (222). In its stead, he offers a “dynamic concatenation of five *elementary forms of racial domination*” which should serve to elucidate the local conditions by which “the walls of ethnoracial division”, remember, *not* racism, “are made”: categorization, discrimination, segregation, ghettoization, and racial violence (230). This call is a direct answer to what he perceives as an obsession with discourse in the historical anthropological work of Ann Laura Stoler.

One is tempted to dismiss Wacquant's proposal as a sleight of hand in which the concept of racism is vanished into its common manifestations and merely rebranded. In fact, his arguments reveal a deeply-rooted claim about structure and agency, a problematic ideological commitment to the relative autonomy of the academic field, and a theory of race that is more in line with an intersectional reading than a relational one. Given the usefulness of his work to other elements of this dissertation, not to mention his deserved popularity in the study of urban space, state repression, and racial ghettoization, the limits of his approach must be clearly defined before the value of a relational approach to race can be fully ascertained.

Put simply, inquiry into the mechanisms of racism is not advanced by centralizing the concept of racial domination; on the contrary, taking on this question is to parrot the ideology of liberalism much in the same way as the intersectionalists. Race is not a field, in the Bourdieuian sense. The field in question is, in fact, one of domination, but not domination over race and certainly not domination of *a* race. One can only imagine that race is primarily a question of racial domination if one takes for granted a parliamentary vision of power where concrete identities shuffle tactics and positions in the ethereal pantheon I alluded to above. Both 'white' and 'black', to borrow the classic Anglo-American dichotomy, are the manifestations of an evolving mechanism of order and control which naturalized the artificial human relations of production in capitalism and the state's production of space. Racism is not only a social reality with great heuristic potential, but one far more real and with far greater explanatory power than a concept of racial domination which mistakes the cateogorizations of the state and capital for organic phenomena upon which the political economy is merely overlaid. We know race, not through a strategic overlay of competing interest groups, but the outcome of the ever-opposed-yet-integrated relations of class struggle.

The ultimate answer to Wacquant's ban on the concept of racism comes from writers like Theodore W. Allen, Peter Linebaugh, Marcus Reddiker, and Gregory Meyerson who share a conception of race as an active structuring force in the arrangement of capitalist society as well as a reactionary sociocultural effect of its exigencies. Allen's (1994) specific focus on the "invention of the white race" as a ruling-class strategy to contain labor unrest in the 18th century – an invention which worked to the detriment of all workers, not towards the domination of white workers over black – is bolstered and expanded on by Linebaugh and Reddiker's (2013) studies of resistance and control tactics of transatlantic capitalism and the era of enclosures which saw both the creation of and resistance to tactics of racial division and repression. In this "quest for origins" so castigated by Wacquant, we see both the structural significance of race in the creation and control of the proletariat as well as the agency at the heart of its creation. Indeed, Loic, there are culprits to be found and it is their mechanisms that must be isolated and explained. Incidentally, one of these culprits enjoys a very favorable citation in Wacquant's article, though we will come to this in a moment.

Only a class-struggle conception of race offers an alternative to the hegemonic categories reproduced by the racial-domination perspective. Critiquing Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* (2000) with the historical materialism of Allen, Linebaugh, and Reddiker, Gregory Meyerson[1] carries the argument beyond the question of origins and looks ahead to a "felt class-based internationalism which operates by making the fight against racism and sexism itself basic". He faults the left nationalism of Robinson on the same grounds as I am now faulting Wacquant and the intersectionalists, for creating a primal architechtonic of identity of which class struggle appears as a foreign element instead of a workshop for the development and refinement of systemic racism. This position contributes to the left apologies for nationalism as 'authentic' interpretations of local conditions. There is some irony then in Wacquant's admonition of Ann Laura Stoler for what he sees as an un-reflexive "barter between folk and analytical notions" (222), since the call to replace 'racism' with 'racial domination' – read: "the issue of equality between races" – reproduces folk conceptions of race at the expense of a structural analysis.

Continuing on this path of irony, Wacquant defends this call for the objective distance of the sociological from the social by referencing Max Weber, a man whose work in German politics laid the groundwork both for the development of National Socialism and the legal grounds for the fascist dictatorship which sprang from it. Weber's own "transparent" objectivity, to borrow again from Spivak, is unchallenged in Wacquant's usage of him which, given the connection between the Nazis and the word "racism" itself, is at best a substantial oversight. At worst, though, it signals an unflinching commitment to *political objectivity* of analytic work which appears to be the primary inspiration for Wacquants dismissal of the word "racism". If we acknowledge, following Stoler through her historical ethnographies of Sumatran plantations as well as Allen, Linebaugh, and

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[1] Gregory Meyerson: "Rethinking Black Marxism: Reflections on Cedric Robinson and Others". Accessed June 18, 2017. http://clogic.eserver.org/3-1&2/meyerson.html.

Reddiker, that racism is a real *technique of control* which shapes and is shaped by class struggle, then we must also acknowledge the existence of the *technician*. Far from seeking the agency of racism, Wacquant even suggests that we take Marine LaPenne at her word before we accuse her of racism in our grand inquisition. Yes, Loic, this is an inquisition! So, let us cease this “uncontrolled conflation” of 'objectivity' and 'collaboration' in our discussion of race and power.

The collaborationist thread: “The ruling ideas of each age...”

There is a common thread in the dominant discussion of race that ties Wacquant together with the intersectionalists and extends even into the post-Marxist identity politics of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Their vision of society as a constellation “crisscrossed with antagonisms” encourages an atomized vision of oppression with individuality as its formless heart (1985:135). This vision invites us to join the Sisyphean sociology of cataloging identity categories and operator-less mechanisms to refuel our ever-exhausted claims to 'objectivity' only to start all over again once new claims of common struggle erupt around the planet. Apart from rendering us deaf to the churning cannibal engine of class struggle that powers the world system, this view actively encourages the terms and fields of 'the ruling class' and sells us the logical support to see Barack Obama's election to the U.S. presidency or Marine Le Pen’s leadership of the National Front as victories for discrete identities that have, in ways unique to their own constitution, experienced oppression and exploitation throughout history. When social sciences, presidents, and bitter nationalists find common ground, we must at least consider that we are engaged not in critique, but in collaboration. “The ruling ideas of each age,” wrote Marx and Engels, “have ever been the ideas of its ruling class”[2].

Central among the many tools of Anthropology has been the ability to isolate ruling ideas. Traditionally, these have entailed an outline of kinship, a description of a cosmological apparatus, or, after Marx was worked into ethnography, underlying structural dualities at the heart of systems of categorization. This body of knowledge took European and American anthropologists far from their homes and, upon turning back, they saw their own social systems as objects of analysis and began to isolate the ruling ideas therein. The advent of post-colonial critiques of knowledge production further estranged Euro-American identity from its hegemonic grip over anthropology until finally Spivak's transparent intellectual was made opaque. The invisible writer of culture now had a culture of their own. For many, this is where ethnography ended and a vast section of Anthropology in the 1990's muddled about aimlessly and incestuously in its own “cultural turn”. Guilt over being found-out rendered those once transparent peeping toms into penitent advocates of those their predecessors dispossessed through their un-reflexive representation. The self-obsession of collective penitence brought identity politics to the fore and buried the old mission of cultural anthropology under infinite loops of egoism. Writers like Stoler, however, have broken though the miasmal egoism and returned to this mission, isolating the ruling ideas of a social system and showing its recapitulation in social practice. In order to accomplish this, these class-oriented anthropologists are forced to see the local as constituted by and constitutive of the global system of capitalism. Isolation and purity are no longer an option and the ruling ideas of the age can only be isolated if seen as expressions of a ruling class. The old mission of anthropology has been reclaimed in the ethnographic study of class struggle. Consequently, this has made the Mouffes, Laclaus, Wacquants and intersectionalists of the social sciences opaque once more as the unwitting logicians of rule.

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[2] *The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter II. 1848.

Racism as a world historical order

In his bold critique of European Marxism, Cedric Robinson claims that a racial architectonic far preceded capitalism and therefor cannot be said to have come from class struggle. His book, *Black Marxism*, employs a wealth of historical *longue durée* narratives and attempts to establish the preexistence of a deeply rooted system of classification based on primitive ideas of race, seen here as a broader form of nationalism (2000). Foucault, in Stoler's reading of some of his unpublished lectures, would have largely concurred with this interpretation and claims that the epistemological infrastructure of classification which constructed race was primary to that which eventually divided social classes (1995). By contrast, Meyerson refutes Robinson's understanding of the Marxist approach to race, reminding him that, in the words of the Communist Manifesto, “the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles” of which capitalism is only the most recent (Meyerson, *Ibid.*). In turn, Stoler herself sets Benedict Anderson up as the counterpoint to Foucault's assertions by adding a global dimension. Class positions, in the case of colonialism, cemented large-scale ideas about race through the process of colonial control (1995:30). Local aristocracy was often permitted to remain intact under colonial rule since such arrangements appeared to support primordialist politics of “blood purity” which had long justified class rule in Europe (Anderson 2013:137).

Foucault and Robinson build their studies on the technique of classification as it manifests itself in or as groups. Foucault's focus is on the internal constitution of the social body while Robinson's is on the violence of inter-group exclusion. Both see class as an identification and are therefore confined to finding it in history as it manifests itself in social and political discourse. Despite Wacquant's admonition that Stoler fetishizes discourse, she in fact critiques discursive determinism since it wrongly “assumes first of all that 'class' and 'race' occupied distinct spaces in the folk social taxonomies of Europe, that they were discursively and practically discrete social categories” (1995:127). The Foucault/Robinson identity-based genealogy of race cannot see class as a social relation and a struggle which manifests itself in countless forms throughout history.

As Don Kalb so efficiently puts it, “Class struggle comes before the language of class” (2016:16); what Wacquant mistakes in Stoler as a fetishization of discourse is in fact an indispensable sensitivity to how class struggle is communicated in practice in a “shifting field of forces” (15). If the reader will forgive a bit of 'quotational Frankensteining', I would cite Kalb and Carrier at length:

> The anthropology of class, then, is in the first place about the web of contradictory social relations itself...This is not just the bundle of contractual relations between capitalist employers and employees in a particular place, or the distributional inequalities between people... rather, it is a much more encompassing set of global, uneven, social and geographic power balances, surrounded by an array of unevenly assembled myths, ideologies, and practices... Such a view of class is absolutely necessary if we are to perceive and make sense

> of the interlocking exploitative, extractive, uneven, and constantly transformative relational antagonisms that fire up and refuel the variable engines of global capitalism. (14)

To my mind, this program should entail at a minimum the abandonment of the ethereal parliament of identity posited explicitly both in intersectional theory and post-Marxist rhetoric as well as implicitly by Wacquant's “dynamic concatenation” of racial domination and Foucault's and Robinson's search for the epistemological architectonic of race in Europe. Instead of a grid of intersecting causes of oppression, we must look, in Luisa Ster's words, for the “axis of inequality” upon which the class relationship turns under conditions of struggle (2011:9).

While historians by trade, Allen, Linebaugh, and Reddiker have made groundbreaking efforts of exactly the kind advocated for by Kalb in the development of race through global capitalism. Building from the fact that Irish laborers were not considered white until relatively late in American capitalism, Allen asks what, in lieu of phenotypical markers, constituted the “white race” at this time? He locates its invention in the machinations of capitalist rule. “When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619,” he famously and controversially writes, “there were no white people there” (1994:32). Whiteness was established long after “negro” was made synonymous with “unfree property” through the conscious creation of social and legal privileges (129). Without denying the complicity of sections of the proletariat, Allen is quick to refute the oft-cited David Roediger's assertions that American racism is the organic result of working-class competitiveness (683). Vastly expanding on Allen's argument, Linebaugh and Reddiker show through centuries of discourse and practices of Atlantic capitalism that the proletariat had historically resisted these efforts tooth and nail. The development of a system of racism which could soak up and re-represent class struggle was a hard fought victory on the part of the ruling strata of burgeoning capitalism (2013). They tangentially track the long development of the concept of “whiteness” in the racial classification systems of modernity, concluding that its most common manifestation was as shorthand for “the rich” (463). The doctrine of white supremacy, in total contrast to the claims of Roediger and Robinson, was constructed in response to the “motley” character of anti-capitalist resistance in the 17th and 18th centuries (468). Having thoroughly expelled the notion that racism is the organic and logical combination of natural/phenotypical diversity and economic scarcity, these critical historians of race offer a tale of class struggle, not of racial domination.

Returning to Stoler affords us a chance to see what is gained in this tale from the anthropological gaze. Filling in for the eurocentric shortcomings of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, Stoler insists that no theory of European identity can possibly be complete without locating its origins outside of Europe proper. Whereas Foucault convincingly argued that truth claims about sex provided the basis for the ideational construction of the European bourgeois body, Stoler extends and completes this position, adding the “racially erotic counterpoint” of colonized peoples (1995:6). By creating the savage other, European 'racial' identity was created by “identifying marginal members of the body politic” by which the ruling ideologues “mapped the moral parameters of European nations” (7). Here we see how the distinctly anthropological preoccupation with webs of significance melds with concrete histories of class rule without falling back on quasi-mystical assumptions of collective consciousness or sociological psychoanalysis that so frequently accompanies explanations of racism.

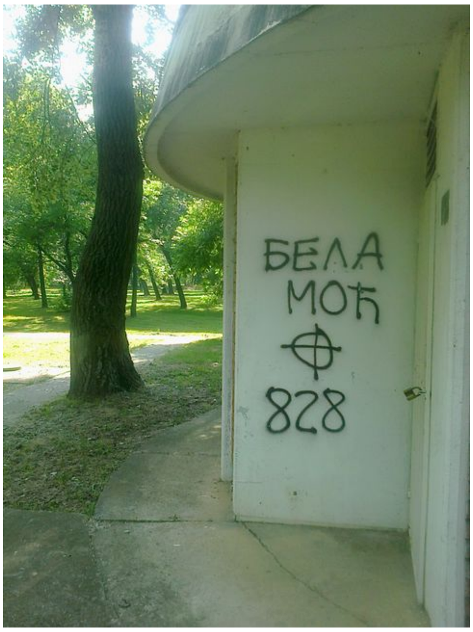

Illustration 1: Grafitti on Ada Ciganlija: "White Power" and "828" a reference to Blood and Honor

My Serb friends and students in Belgrade maintain a pronounced ambivalence regarding their own ‘Whiteness’; one is apt to hear phrases like, “Serbs are the gypsies of Europe” or even, more recently, “Serbs are the niggers of Europe”. That said, Serb-ness is quite often defined in contradistinction to ‘gypsies’ in their own country, as I elaborate on in chapter two. Sharon Zukin’s 1970s ethnographic work in Yugoslavia reported that Serbs considered themselves “*blizanci*” – twins – in that they “are very close in temperament” (1975:225), yet it is precisely this proximity that separates them. The closer one gets, the sharper these differences appear. These sentiments were still present in Serbia by the mid-90s, according to ethnographer Mattijs van de Port, whose research on Serbia *kafana* culture explained the persistent popularity of gypsy music despite their otherwise total marginalization through a sort of cultural sublimation in the Serb mentality. “Gypsies represent what we are,” explains one of his informants, “although we are not allowed to be it” (1998:154). This is Stoler’s “racially erotic counterpoint” *par excellence*, the Serbs see themselves as burdened by a civilization that gypsies have somehow avoided or rejected. This is not the “white man’s burden” in the missionary sense of Rudyard Kipling, but that of accepting the international normalization of their European-ness through catch-up projects of modernization. Whiteness has been offered to the Serbs and is this a directionality and an order, not an identity or birthright.

This offer is the foundational contract of the international ‘White Power’ movement as imagined by Stormfront, the openly racist internet community on which Serbs are the sixth most represented ‘nation’:

> So in response to the question, "Who's White?" we answer: "Non-Jewish people of wholly European descent. No exceptions."... Note the word "wholly" -- "of wholly European descent." Sometimes a person might volunteer that he is some small part non-White, like 1/64th or 1/128th, and then ask if we still consider him White. The answer is that if a person identifies with his non-White part so much that he is concerned about it and feels compelled to tell us about it, then we consider him to be non-White.[3]

Here is the both the deal offered and the conditions of its fulfillment in good faith. The declaration is simultaneously a renunciation. For Stormfront, a lack of purity is no barrier to Whiteness – a lack of commitment is. So long as a member identifies with any part of their non-European heritage they cannot be considered in solidarity with their whiteness. The emphasis on solidarity is echoed by the American White nationalist organization, the National Vanguard:

> National Vanguard celebrates the cultural diversity of the White race. Our beautiful

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[3] Law, John. Who's White?. White Hot Radio Podcast, November 3, 2006.

> languages, traditions, and cultures are a strength. We are pan-European in our views and stand unconditionally opposed to conflicts between White peoples. Outside forces often exploit one White ethnicity against another. We do not excuse anti-White hatreds or historical "scores," and will consistently work towards reconciliation and unity in places such as the Balkans and Northern Ireland. Our watchword is no more brothers' wars.[4]

One performs Whiteness by refusing to engage in struggle against those of your race as well as refusing to engage in solidarity with the Other. It is in some ways an appeal to internationalism and in others an appeal to a super-nationalism drawn on borders of European descent. It is a call for peace between brothers. The proletarian and the repressive apparatus of State control are in common cause provided both seek peace in a shared European identity. Thus, when I refer to people as 'whites' or performing 'whiteness', it is to this direction I refer, the multi-cultural internationalism of a racially European order.

NO MORE BROTHERS WARS
UKRAINE & RUSSIA

Illustration 2: Grafitti in Studenski Park, 2015: "No more brothers wars"

In chapter two, I will be arguing for an understanding of the 'gypsy' as a racial production of exploitation and 'Control', a term specifically defined in the following section, thus of class struggle. My occasional usage of the epithet 'white' throughout this dissertation is also based on the above meditations on race as a relation and an international historical movement. I would urge against too critical a stance against these terms on the grounds that they may not always be employed by actors in the field, since whiteness and gypsiness, in a class-based anthropological approach, is not an 'identity' in the Wacqantian or intersectionalist sense, but a relation that is intrinsically global, hierarchical, and bound to the State. Thus, to complete my theoretical approach, I must produce an anarchist anthropology of the State which accounts for the many movements against it exposed in this work.

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[4] *Ibid.* Though in reference to the works and ideas of Kevin Alfred Strom.

[i/C] Anarchism and the State

The anarchist intervention in anthropology

Studies of anarchist organizations in anthropology have tended focused on how the tactical converges with the organizational to produce sustained critical activities against the capitalist world system (Bray 2013, Graeber 2009, Juris 2008, Razsa 2007, Ringel 2012). Others, while not abandoning this task, center class struggle as their analytical engine and have endeavored to engage in the making and unmaking of the working class as realized in historical anarchist movements (Buier 2015, Lynd and Grubačić 2009). Anarchism has also become interrogated as a freshly situated tenant in the barracks of anthropology, a residence in no small part due to the decades-long efforts of anthropologist and public figure, David Graeber. Since then, new anarchist positionalities have increasingly seeped into normal anthropological scholarship with less and less space devoted to defending said positionality as legitimate in the field. Thus, Holly High, a beneficiary of this transition, calls on ethnographers to examine the anarchism of everyday practices, positioning 'banal' anarchism as an ethnographically accessible countermovement to the banality of the interpersonal expression of the State in Marcel Rolph-Trouillot's and Corrigan and Sayer's formulations, discussed in greater detail below (2012:93). Similarly, Robinson and Tormey have suggested, echoing the now classic *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* by David Graeber, that the ethnographic record is a font both of practical examples of anarchistic social organization but also of arguments legitimating the core mission of anarchism itself in its historic attention to non-state cultures (2012:143). Both continuing the normalization of anarchism into anthropology and uniting these trends, I have elsewhere suggested that the anarchist conception of class as a relation is generally more holistic and nimble than that of many orthodox strands of Marxism and thus more "anthropological" (Schulze 2012). As my own work offers an anarchist intervention into the anthropology of class, it is from here that a case for anarchist anthropology must be made.

One might summarize the anarchist conception of class as follows: class is a relation marked by exploitative hierarchy, producing integrated yet opposed interests which define one another by this division. Anarchism, in its European "Big-A" manifestation of the First International, proposed that this relation is present in the relations of the State just as much as those of capitalism, a position extended to family structures, authoritarian unions, race, and gender politics in the golden era of 20th century immigrant anarchism in the United States carried by prominent voices in the labor movement like Emma Goldman, Aleksander Berkman, and Lucy Parsons. The anarchist critique of the State and capitalism is as much a product of the global periphery as it is the European center (Anderson 2007, Grubačić 2016, Hirsch and van der Walt 2014, Marshall 1992, Schmidt and van der Walt 2009). Here, confrontation with various forms of governmentality and varieties of exploitation merged into a nebulous but discreet critical appraisal of the world system long before the Wallersteinian vocabulary existed to frame it as such. The last decade of work by James Scott (1998, 2011, 2012) to rehabilitate anarchism in the political studies of socioeconomic cultures on the periphery have been both exciting and woefully incomplete. While such studies returned an intentionality and agency to those we in our obsessive intellectual war on capitalism so often relegate to the categorical mass grave of 'victims', they also limit the struggle of such groups to the purely political, 'the buck stops' in the offices and regiments of the State; class and capitalism are laregly invisible. Grubačić and O'Hearne advance and improve upon Scott's project in *Living on the Edges of Capitalism* (2016), centering the periphery as the bearers of revolutionary anarchistic experimentation, while reintroducing the problem of world-system capitalism in the conditions of their research subjects. In turn, I proceed as well along this geneological track by centralizing class-struggle as the creative dynamic of my own highly peripheral subjects. My work proposes a full circle, returning class-struggle to Bakunin's “flower of the proletariat” (1950[1872]):

> ...that eternal “meat (on which governments thrive), that great rabble of the people (underdogs, “dregs of society”) ordinarily designated by Marx and Engels in the picturesque and contemptuous phrase *Lumpenproletariat.* I have in mind the “riffraff,” that “rabble” almost unpolluted by bourgeois civilization, which carried in its inner being and in its aspirations, in all the necessities and miseries of its collective life, all the seeds of the socialism of the future.

Interrogating this “flower” through he anthropology of class joins with Bakunin in his call to return those cast aside by an exclusive focus on the industrial proletariat. That said, however inspiring the call to revitalize the super-marginal is in this ancient and brittle declaration of loyalty, an anarchist anthropology of class must establish the relational means by which the riffraff and rabble come to be as an inexorable part of “bourgeois civilization”, while containing in its critique the contingency and fragility of that very civilization. As anarchist anthropology strives to hear the voices of the subaltern and remake itself in response, and as the anthropology of class defetishizes culture and identity as sites of struggle and critical junctions intersecting scales of power, the anarchist anthropology of class must in its turn destabilize both the scalar assumptions of etatism by linking marginalized agencies into an “archipelago of rupture” without losing site of global forces shaping the creative conditions of such agencies. To this end, I examine the structural forces shaping the conditions of the emergence of the InexFilm squat, the Koko Lepo youth solidarity collective, and the *Deponija* Roma settlement *as well as* the connective, solidarity-making power of Koko Lepo's direct interventions in both sites and that which may be hidden within what I call “*ciganist* situations” experienced by 'gypsies' in Belgrade.

Of course, what makes anarchist anthropology unique is its incessant insistence on theorizing the State. This is not new to anthropology necessarily, but the anarchist intervention in the discipline emphasizes the active role of the State as an antagonistic force with real effects on our people of study and the existence of which is contingent on its integration and mystification into the social. I argue that this intervention must be based on a fusion of Marxist state theory and anthropological and sociological critiques that, while based in the class struggle, enable the State to be carried by sociocultural processes and thus able to be interrogated directly by ethnographic work. Furthermore, as my own work is so closely based on the development and experiences of anti-State actors, be they anarchist by choice or ‘gypsy’ by racist enforcement techniques, we would be unable to build a holistic appreciation for such groups without an equally holistic theory of the State itself.

The State: a refinement of the term

The reader will notice a common exchange in this dissertation between the terms ‘the State’ and ‘Control’. My tendency to use these proper nouns over “governmentality” is to emphasize the shifting and multiple loci of this function – the holistic agency of statehood, as I elaborate on at some length below. To be clear, I will be arguing that 'Control' is 'The State', but to reduce confusions with ideas like 'the government' or the 'the police', which should be seen only as facets of the State, as well as to open up state functions to popular assemblages, NGOs, and the concerted efforts of hegemonic ideologues, I offer 'Control' as an aid to re-frame the epistemological problem of statehood. The task now then, before moving forward, is to quickly recap what I understand to be the most relevant theoretical ideas about Statehood in the literature, expand on these with the frame of 'Control', and then recapitulate the State on these terms. To this end, we shall need to examine [1] the Marxist structural approach stemming from European statecraft, [2] the “State-effects” model of the neoliberal state inspired by Post-Colonial Africa, and [3] the Bourdieuian approach to the social interpersonal reproduction of the State in conjunction with the critical Anarchist postulates of Gustav Landauer. In a way, this three-pronged approach mirrors Wric Wolf's prescription for anthropological approaches to power.

Marxism and the State: from “supernaturalist abortion” to “functional form”

There are innumerable contributions to the Marxist inquiry into the State and I am not convinced that our own investigation would be substantially furthered by a full recount. I would offer, instead, an accelerated narrative of the Marxist state debate and forward the work of Simon Clarke as a reliable and effective synthesis and refinement of these strands of thought.

Engels' book *On the Origins of Family, Private Property, and State*, Marx's writings on the Paris Commune, and their shared work on *The Communist Manifesto* are commonly seen as the progenitors of Marxian state theory. It is well known, for instance, that *Manifesto* calls for the proletarian capture of the State and before its subsequent “withering away” in the transition to communism. What exactly is meant by 'the State', however, is not precisely known although *Origins* provides some pretty clear ideas; “In possession of the public power and the right of taxation,” Engels writes, “the officials themselves now present themselves as organs of society standing above society.” The relative autonomy of the State arises from its primary function: the enforcement of class rule. He continues, “The ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave-owners for holding down the slaves, just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is the instrument for exploiting wage labor by capital.” The State here, for Engels, is a specific body with a world-historical task. When the proletariat finally takes the state, then, the state will enforce the rule of the proletariat.

Marx's contributions to early state theory are bit more opaque. *The Civil War in France* for instance praises the Commune's abolition of certain bodies typically associated with the State, such as the standing army, and focused on the transformations of key functions of statecraft such as educational, judicial, and legislative from bourgeois into proletarian forms. Despite the calls for a “dictatorship of the proletariat” in *the Manifesto,* Marx intimates in his Commune writings a deep mistrust and even outright rejection of the “supernaturalist abortion of society” called the State which amounts to nothing less then the “horrid machinery of class domination itself” (1871). One might be forgiven for mistaking these sentiments for those of Mihail Bakunin, Marx's anarchist rival, who is commonly credited with viewing state power as producing class distinctions on its own. Indeed Marx's position on this in Capital Volume 1, a book that Bakunin himself was supposed to translate before their fateful falling out in the First International, would seem to support the Bakuninist position on the State. Writing on the primitive accumulation of colonialist brutality, Marx states quite plainly, “force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. *It is itself an economic power,*” (Capital I, Chapter 31, emphasis added). This ardent refusal to draw clean distinctions between the economic and political is the defining characteristic of a critical view of the State.

As for the origins of the State, both Engels' and Marx's conceptions of the state were greatly influenced by Lewis Henry Morgan's evolutionary narratives; from these Marx concluded that the State was not innate to human organization but developed from two key historical moments relating to the development of property relations in specific scales of accumulation. He theorized that the State's genesis lay in the dissolution of traditional *gens*, the network of families which acted as conflict mediators and organizational structures, which fell to the increased internal divisions in property holders and those dispossessed of it. The second moment lay in the conflicts in interests between increasingly discrete private interests which, when combined with the first moment, necessitated the creation of The State as both mediator and guarantor (Krader 1974:83). This work along with the general theorizing of Engels and Marx bore the two key elements of the Marxist state debate: the first attended to the idea of a State which mediates or sublimates class-conflict and the other to the structural-function of the state as a reproducer of the conditions of capitalist production with the issue of the state's “relative autonomy” looming ever overhead.

Simon Clarke's (1991) excellent and concise summary of what followed along these lines a century later shall suffice here. In the 1960s and 70s, *The New Left Review* and the Conference of Socialist Economists were embroiled with a debate between Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas over the precise nature of the capitalist State. Miliband had successfully fended-off a trending argument that the English state remained under aristocratic rule; he argued that the bourgeois character of the capitalist state was clear merely by dint of it being a capitalist State. In Miliband's conception, a proactive strata of political managers were actively representing the interests of the bourgeoisie through their explicit collaboration with capital (Miliband 1983). Poulantzas, attacked Miliband for holding onto a bourgeois epistemology of class as “for itself” only and argued that his ideas of the state preclude an appreciation of class struggle as fundamental to class rule (Clarke 1991:18). He offered a state based on flows of capital and power between relatively autonomous but interconnected agencies all of which centralize capitalism *structurally* regardless of the intentions of individual bureaucrats (Poulantzas 2000).

A decade later, Bob Jessop would build on Poulantzas' arguments, attempting to bring human agency back into what he perceived to be an overly mechanistic view of state power. His view of the state as a "strategic-relational apparatus" replaced Poulantzas' oiled machine of spatial power with a frantic, clanking heap of strategies to resolve the destructive internal contradictions of capitalism itself. Jessop's view, then, explained both the austere brutality of State-led primitive accumulation and the ameliorating hand of the welfare state as reactionary relations to capitalism relative to its local manifestations (Jessop 2007). For Clarke, this advance was incomplete as it suggested that the State could resolve the contradictions of capital instead of being an expression of those contradictions. He points instead to the joint work of Sol Piccioto and John Holloway that problematized, not the repressive apparatus of the state nor its management duties, but the myth of freedom that it produces. To create free labor, the capitalist state must be structurally separate from civil society, a body that is also created in this act of separation. This form of separation is a *functional form*, it is both real and illusory, and creates the image of a relative autonomy of the political from the economic. Holloway and Piccioto allow us to locate the State equally in the ideological as a guarantor of liberty and in the repressive as the defender of inequity with neither requiring us to conceive of a strategic division of labor, effectively cutting the Althusserian thread that Poulantzas wove into Jessop's epistemology. They suggest that class conciousness must prioritize the destruction of the functional form of the State itself. One then does not "take the State" if one seeks to overcome the capitalist form of value production, one denies the separation of the political from the economic and in so doing denies the basis of the capitalist state itself. "The state cannot stand above value relations," Clarke concludes, "for the simple reason that the state is inserted in such relations as one moment of the class struggle over the reproduction of capitalist relations of production" (1991:45).

While Clarke's certainly did not resolve the state debate within avowedly Marxist intellectual circles, he does, through Holloway and Piccioto, open up a back door for the entrance of the anthropological gaze. Clarke gives us a state which is both an expression of capitalism's destructive tendencies and an intrinsic part of capitalist relations which manages to adhere itself to value regimes within capitalist society while nonetheless appearing external to it. It is simultaneously an effect of class rule yet endangered by class struggle. If the State is no longer seen as organically above society but rather the effect of capitalist society's own reproduction then the social fact of the state becomes an undeniably anthropological problem.

Social science and the State: 'state-effects', 'the idea of the State', and 'state formation'

Clarke's conclusions from the Marxian state debate can be brought to bear on the "state-effects" model of ethnographic researchers, particularly those coming from the study of the post-colonial world. Timothy Mitchell proposes a sociologically-based political-scientific theory of the state as "an effect of detailed processes organization, temporal arrangement, functional specification, and supervision and surveillance, which create the appearance of a world fundamentally divided into state and society or state and economy" (Mitchell 1991:95). His historical reconstruction of Egyptian statehood as a collection of concrete efforts and agencies would eventually put this into practice by elucidating the discord and contingency of state-making hidden by claims to the existence of a harmonious and purposeful State (Mitchell 1991). Contemporaneous efforts to anthropologize the State included notable ethnographers like James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta working in South Africa and especially Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot who moved from making the State an object of study to making these "detailed processes" themselves visible and penetrable as "state effects". Inspired by Foucault (2010[1978-9]) and Bourdieu (1994) on the diffuse mosaic of top-down practices called "governmentality" and the bureaucratic "legibility effect" respectively, the state-effects model provides a means of approaching the State as integrated into the sociocultural milieu rather than opposed to it, thus answering the challenge posed above by Clarke, Holloway, and Piccioto. State-effect ethnography presents a conceptualization of the "state as society" (Pieke 2004); the state does not produce effects within society but is itself the effect of actors engaging in multivariate social practices: 'encompassing' and 'verticalizing' effects in the case of Ferguson and Gupta's studies (2002) and 'spatialization', 'identification', 'isolation', and 'legibility' effects in Trouillot's (2001).

Trouillot's work in particular merits elaboration as it in many ways bridges the gap between the all-to-often esoteric Marxian theorizations of Statehood and the dirty concrete of lived practices. His "isolation effect", for instance, is also found in Poulantzas' writings and refers to the project of atomization and individualization of subjects by administrators, hence their conversion into objects fit for governance. Poulantzas' take on the effect was, of course, more precisely focused on the individuation of producers as a means of occluding the class relationship at the heart of capitalism (Clarke 1991:86), though the effect itself is essentially the same insofar as its role in statecraft is concerned. Another example of this bridging is the "spatialization effect" which Trouillot identifies as the "production of boundaries and jurisdictions" (126) and mirrors almost exactly Marxist geographer Neil Smith's conception of the state as a concerted and struggling effort of territorialization and reterritorialization which shapes the World System (2008:225). Ferguson and Gupta similarly approach the problem of State-making and space-making as "verticalizing" and "encompassing" acts of bureaus and their actors (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Moving on down the list, Trouillot's "identification effect", a corollary of the aforementioned isolation effect, is the process by which individuals associate with others into groups and recognize themselves, and are recognized, as metonyms of these collective identities. Recent ethnographic work by Marko Ferenc in citizenship bureaus at the cusp of South Sudanese statehood has proven the centrality of this process to state claims as well as exposed the chaos and disunity of the identification effect itself as a moral logic (2015). Finally, Trouillot continues on ground well-worn by Bourdieu on the legibility effect of statecraft which he defines as "the production of both a language and a knowledge for governance and of theoretical and empirical tools that classify and regulate collectivities" (2001:126).

Harboring an implicit wariness of the state as effects a good decade before the concepts normalization in anthropology, sociologist Philip Abrams suggests abandoning the State completely as an object and instead proposes a critical examine the idea of the state itself as a set of claims to domination, independent unity, and purpose which mask political practices (1977[1988]:124). As early as 1979, he called on social scientists to “make a ruthless assault on the whole set of claims in terms of which the being of the state is proposed” (122). Revitalizing Miliband to a certain extent, Abrams argued that a focus on the actual relations of political actors that make up the “state system” can be studied but without 'the State' itself (122). The state is...” Abrams wrote, “...a triumph of concealment” (123). What is concealed are the internally conflicted and often contradictory relations between political actors in their individual attempts to dominate others. He was nonetheless unconvinced that the State, as an ideal or otherwise, is functional to the reproduction of capitalism (124); the “functional form” of separation is hence denied along with the question of class rule. The sole effect he grants the state is that of legitimation which itself is the function of ideology. Instead of being the gray emminence of capialist class relations, “the real official secret” argues Abrams, “is the secret of the non-existence of the state” (123).

With Abrams, we see a State as an ideology concealing real subjugation entirely separate from the economic life of those being subjugated and therefore Abrams' idea-of-the-idea-of-the-State would, for Clarke, Piccioto and Holloway, be complicit in their idea of its “functional form”. Conversely, the “functional form” school of thought finds itself complicit with the oppressive claimants to Statehood in Abrams' formulation and therefor unable to offer a liberating critique of State power. To reiterate my earlier admonitions against collaboration with the ruling ideas of the age, this is a significant impasse. However, as we advance towards the issue of racism and state power, it occurs to me that the invisibility of 'the State', if indeed it did exist, would in no way damage the legitimacy of the state system, in fact it could reinforce it. By this I refer to back to the state effects of Ferguson and Gupta who look to Non-Governmental Organizations, not only the official government, to explain the neoliberal State in post-colonial South Africa. Though responsible for the State itself, the NGO makes no pretensions to statehood and explicitly rejects such associations in its very identification. Sadly, Abrams died before he could witness the “NGOization” of the State and so must remain silent on the issue of the state's transencendance from its Althuserian limitations as either ideological or repressive apparatuses.

Furthermore, what happens to the Abrams State when police functions are performed by non-political actors like neofascist youth groups promoting ideals of centralized nation-based dominance and repression while supposedly standing outside or even against the State? How would Abrams account for the seamless integration of criminal organizations into politics without accepting an underlying formal and functional unity *despite* the denials on both sides that this situation represents an “idea of the State”? Without accepting an *actual* unity of purpose beneath the false masks of pretension that Abrams rightly calls-out, how can we approach the *longue duree* consistency of urban rule in Belgrade, as I will below, despite supposedly profound regime changes in governments? If we take Abrams' own criteria for the theoretical salience of a State concept, asking ourselves if we are “in a better or worse condition to understand the relationship between political institutions and class domination”, than we must admit that there is much to lose in our capacity to explain this relationship when we abandon the study of the state.

Sayer and Corrigan brought historical concreteness to Abrams' program in their most important work *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (1985). As the title suggests, and with the same nod to Engels Abrams affords in his own work, Sayer and Corrigan argue that the State is not a thing in any real sense but rather an outcome of a cultural revolution in politics. In their narrative, tactics of repression mix with master symbols of contract and nation to produce an agent-driven process of “state formation” (*Ibid.*). The image of the State is in fact the result of a long historical process of “disintegration – dilution, disruption, denial” of alternative modes of organization (196). It is not a relatively autonomous organ standing above society yet “'the State' has orchestrated the unending project of moral regulation” (200). It is impossible not to detect a strong sense of ambivalence towards the state as a research object. The authors make no bones about supporting Abrams' rejection of the objectification of the State yet find themselves unable to talk around it or to avoid giving it creative powers. In fact, in a later text, Corrigan offers a program for studying the State as “state formation” that essentially mirrors the early “state effects” approach of Mitchell while dovetailing easily with Holloway and Piccioto’s de-institutionalizing analysis. In summary, this reads: [1] attack the terms of the political elite, [2] historicize the *form* of rule, [3] look beyond local claims to global processes and interactions, and [4] make visible the racism and patriarchy of organized subjugation. It is very much along these lines that the bulk of my own narrative about Serbian statehood and anti-ciganism will proceed. However, while the State's functional form might have its origin in a particular historical processes, its reproduction has no guarantee without the habitual and quotidian efforts of individuals actors and the maintenance of certain kinds of relationships.

“The State is between us”: Bourdieu and Landauer

Bourdieu's essay “Rethinking the State” (1994), unmatched in its efficiency and clarity considering the opacity of the subject, indirectly supports the Abrams-inspired “state formation” approach of Sayer and Corrigan yet adds a characteristically *habitus*-based dimension. While emphasizing the tangible historical process by which symbolic capital was monopolized in the bureaucratic field through official pretensions to rule, Bourdieu is careful to situate state-formation in the sociocultural field as well. He attempts to explain the “doxic submission to the structures of social order” as a gradual process of monopolization over the idea of the 'universal' evolving from more-or-less arbitrary relations of force into a complex claim to legitimacy. Its complexity, in my reading, stems from the State as a *self-denying* interest that appears instead to arise naturally from the interests of 'the people' thus constituted. Here the State comes, not as a pure imposition, but as a self-denying claim shaped and defended by violence. How does it know itself then? The rise of the social sciences, argues Bourdieu, allowed the State to “think itself through those who attempt to think it” (2). Meanwhile, the concentration of various species of capital, particularly the “capital of physical force”, requires the concentration of other species which, in that process of concentration find themselves delineated and parceled out as relatively autonomous fields (5). This work of categorization is in part accomplished by state ideologues such as political scientists and sociologists and partially by reproduction of the State's reality through the popular *habitus*.

It is not enough, therefore, to simply stop believing in the State like Abrams. As Bourdieu allows us to recognize, it is in fact in those realms unclaimed by the State that we most clearly see the machinations of the State itself. The Bourdieuian state is a far more detailed “functional-form” than that offered by Clarke, Holloway, and Piccioto yet in shying away from capitalism in his analysis, Bourdieu ends up with very little to say about class-struggle. While Bourdieu does manage to elucidate the reproduction of the state in *habitus* as well as through imposition, his account is yet incomplete. The theory of the state needed to situate *ciganism* in Belgrade's political economy and history must account for *both* collaboration *as well as* struggle and resistance. For this we must turn to a very particular personage in European political history, the anarchist revolutionary and cultural theorist Gustave Landauer.

Despite their temporal distance, Bourdieu and Landauer had much in common. They shared a sharply libertarian critique of left politics, a pervading interest in the arts and the working class' association with them, a biting rejection of political representation, and most of all a drive to theoretically unearth the practical foundations of our shared humanity. Where Landauer can be distinguished from Bourdieu, and from whence comes his ability to complete Bourdieu's critique, was his concerted commitment to revolutionary struggle. Landauer positioned himself in direct confrontation with capitalism and held as a given, along with Bourdieu, Marx's analysis of the wage relation. He distanced himself from the pervading strands of revolutionary Marxism at the time over the issue of the teleology embedded in the working class' historic mission (!). Landauer found liberation, not in the class relations of capitalism, but in their opposing image at the base of 'community'. Where the Communist Manifesto found a managing committee for the affairs of the bourgeoisie in the State, Landauer saw these affairs being managed day to day by common people in full ignorant agency. Taught to “think the State”, as Bourdieu would later put it, Landauer appealed to revolutionaries to cease the endless rearticulation of Statism by myopically creating a concrete target out of the State's representatives and to turn their attention with equal fervor to the creation of new means of relating to one another: to reclaim community *from* the State.

> The entire system would vanish without a trace if the people began to constitute themselves as a people apart from the state...A table can be overturned and a window can be smashed. However, those who believe that the state is also a thing or a fetish that can be overturned or smashed are sophists and believers in the Word. The state is a social relationship; a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships; i.e., by people relating to one another differently. The absolute monarch said: I am the state. We, who we have imprisoned ourselves in the absolute state, must realize the truth: we are the state! (in Kuhn 2010:214)

Landauer's committment to overcoming humanity's acqueisence to rule would lead directly to his own violent death at the hands of the counter-revolutionary *Freikorps* in 1919. When the Bavarian Council Republic was inaugurated by a breakaway faction of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in November of 1918, Landauer heeded the call of Kurt Eisner to “advance the transformation of souls as a speaker” (Kuhn 2010:38). He joined several councils and even accepted a title, “The People's Delegate for Culture and Education”, where he pushed for an end to history teaching in all Bavarian schools. Upon Eisner's assassination, Landauer hastily drafted a declaration following a meeting of Munich's Revolutionary Worker's Council to announce the establishment of the council republic before the Majority Social Democrat's solidified their hold and without the blessing of the communist party (39). As with the Sparticists in Berlin and the council republic of Bremen, the right reaction won out and Landauer joined the fates of so many others, beaten and shot to death on the way to prison (40). Landauer's poly-tactical approach to anarchism gave him a powerful and lasting legacy among German anarchosyndicalists as well as being an inspiration for the commune movement of the 1920s (41).

Bourdieu emphasises that the “cognitive structures” of Statehood are not solely ideological in a superstructural sense but are in fact “dispositions of the body” (15). As a corollary, the repressive expressions of the State are not confineable to a specialized apparatus, but are themselves creators of mental structures. “The most brutal relations of force,” writes Bourdieu, “are always simultaneously symbolic relations”. No doubt Landauer would have agreed. However, while their understandings of the State do harmonize in many key respects, especially in the role of its popular reproduction as a social relation, Landauer provides us with a key to the exit door that Bourdieu, responding to decades of structuralist determinism, never quite managed: a cessation to our reproduction of the State and the possibility of new relations. Once the post-structuralist advances are brought back in via Bourdieu's State as the “bank of symbolic capital” which concentrates and centralizes said capital through cateogorization and deliniation, a great deal of subversive power is suddenly afforded those whom the State portends to govern. Refusing the terms of “state-formation” through its categorical claims, refusing its “functional form” as a relatively autonomous political manager, and denying its innumerable effects are all possible through the establishment of counter-arguments in space, the sabotage of identity categories, and in novel social relationships. All three of these efforts were central to the foundation of my field in Belgrade.

Beyond legitimacy: holistic agency and the State-claim

The reader might have noticed in the above discussion the regular and repeated presence of the term “agency”. Despite the hope of restructuration of society without the state through concerted agency as offered by Landauer, the last word in Bourdieu's “long chain of consecration” is inevitably force. If Landauer and Bourdieu are correct and the State truly is reproduced within society and not on top of it, than we must seek to discover the violent forces within 'society' that guarantee its outcome. Of course, this task is embodied primarily by the police, but as I will argue below, this task has an extra-bureaucratic form in popular racism as well. Again, we are looking precisely where the State says that it isn't to discover its true extent. Hence we must move beyond the Weberian, and truly even Bourdieuian, focus on “legitimacy” and instead consider the distribution of State agency.

For this purpose, we must look to a holistic conception of agency. By this, I mean a way of conceiving of human agency as networked and mutually constituted between agents, creating the effect of an agentive whole. We must be allowed to say, “capitalism demands...”, or, “the State enacted...”, without fetishizing the “agentive collectivities” themselves. Paul Kockelman, in a superficially Bourdieuan fashion with Margaret Mead at the helm, approaches this problem, partially, within the individual agent's ever-pressing desire for a social map within which to situate themselves:

> ...if one wants to know where social statuses and mental states reside, or where ultimate (representational) interpretants are embodied and embedded, part of the answer is as follows: in the sanctioning and inferring practices of a semiotic collectivity; as embodied in

> the dispositions of its members; as embedded in the affordances they heed and the instruments they wield; as mediated by their semiotic ontologies and frames; as regimented by their reciprocal attitudes toward each other's social statuses and mental states; and as evinced in their roles, or indices more generally. (Kockelman 2013: 87)

Kockelman gives us two distinct actors in this passage: the practicing "semiotic collectivity" and the individual. Through his prohibitively dense language, Kockelman's basic theoretical narrative is relatively simple and elegant: the existence of a collective created by members engaged in practices of sanction, both positively and negatively, creates concrete social landmarks by which social actors are able to locate themselves in the landscape. The agency of a sanctioning collective is then embodied by the participants in 'general society', so to speak, who recognize themselves in this mapping process (123). A "holistic conception of agency" that I have called for above is realized in this interplay between conscious acting bodies and collective agents. Kockelman, in an earlier text, also introduces the idea of a "distribution of agency" in the world and argues that one must account for a variety of dimensions of agency discretely, dimensions he identifies as, "control, composition, commitment; thematization, characterization, and reason" (2007:387). His principle concern in this text is the issue of accountability, arguing that "squashed together" conceptions of agency cannot account for, by way of example, the "hangman's guilt" upon being the "controller", or "pushing the button" as Kockelman says, because his actions stand relative to the agency of the state as the "composer" of the event (Ibid.).

Paul Kockelman's writings, while theoretically acute and anthropologically founded, contain little-to-no sustained ethnographic support. His work holds great appeal for me, however, as a ready-made system for accounting for the ethnographically concrete reality of racism in Belgrade through agency. Racism is rarely, if ever, self-recognized by its agents and tends to appear as rational judgment or a simple connecting of apparently obvious social dots together. In chapter two, I established the structural-functional role of anti-gypsy racism in the naturalization of the capitalist political-economy in Belgrade. The terrorism of race prejudice is as much the result of "button pushers" as officials and ideologues. Kockelman's theoretical distinctions in the anthropology of agency provide an effective wedge for identifying the interplay between the individual and the collective as more than one of self-reproduction, but of a holistic system of distribution of agency under, or perhaps in the creation of, the State. Roughly speaking, I wish to argue that popular racism is a police agency, and despite the constant cries of European hooligans that "All Cops Are Bastards!", the prevalence of white-pride and anti-ciganism among their ranks in Belgrade makes a cop of them all.

Introducing "Control": wither whiteness?

So, here I wish to offer a compromise. There will be times in this work when it becomes impossible to distinguish between the agency of the State, the amalgamated class of political rule, and that of Kockelman's 'guilty hangman', the agentive "button-pusher". In these times I intend to employ the word "Control" written as a proper noun. "Control" will be used to encompass the desire for the necessary preconditions of capitalist rule as embodied by numerous individual and collective agencies, distributed as they are across the material class divide and irrespective of office or status.

Control is an incestuous entanglement of mutual dependencies and self-denying relationships that democratizes the police function of the State, producing normalized ghettoization and a moral order of collaboration on a grand scale. I take inspiration from William S. Burroughs' damning prose in “Ah Pook is Here!”:

> *Hiroshima, 1945, August 6, sixteen minutes past 8 AM.*
>
> *Who really gave that order?*
>
> *Answer: Control.*
>
> *Answer: The Ugly American.*
>
> *Answer: The instrument of Control.*
>
> *Question: If Control’s control is absolute, why does Control need to control?*
>
> *Answer: Control… needs time.*
>
> *Question: Is Control controlled by its need to control?*
>
> *Answer: Yes.*
>
> *Why does Control need humans, as you call them?*
>
> *Answer: Wait… wait! Time, a landing field. Death needs time like a junkie needs junk.*
>
> *And what does Death need time for?*
>
> *Answer: The answer is sooo simple. Death needs time for what it kills to grow in, for Ah Pook’s sake.*

Control is the ever-toiling operator of an engine dedicated to the primitive accumulation of space, relations, and human beings (“as you call them”) through their conversion into commodities and capital, managing and manipulating the socially necessary labor time in the production and reproduction of capitalism, as outlined in the above section on race and “the excretions of production”. The flow of this production creeps upwards into private hands instead of laterally and diffusely into the clusters of humanity from which they spring. This is accomplished largely in the first instance through the mass death, phsyically and socially realized, of human agents and their environment by converting communal relationships into antagonistic ones over property or identity, and on the other hand in the marginalization and suppression of human labor wherever possible, especially and most invisibly in the reproductive sphere. “Death needs time for what it kills to grow in, for ah Pook's sweet sake!”

It would be foolish to rehash the old debates of Poulantzas and Milliband given the tools of anthropology to show how the ruling ideas of each age are found, not in 'agencies' as conceived of bureaucratically, but in agencies as embodied daily by social actors and sodalities. Burroughs continues:

> *The rulers of this most insecure of all worlds are rulers by accident inept, frightened pilots at the controls of a vast machine they cannot understand, calling in experts to tell them which buttons to push.*

Chapters one and two of this dissertation requires that we entertain the argument that innumerable inept and frightened pilots, bolstered by the expert models of ruling minorities, co-create the neoliberal police state and the racial basis of capitalist rule in Belgrade. The collaborative political trajectory we will sometimes call “Whiteness” will appear as a collective agent in its own right, a grassroots answer to a request for expertise that the State is unable to offer overtly, but unable to operate without. My anarchist anthropological theory of the State lends ethnographic potency to Burroughs' perhaps unintended implications that rule is not necessarily the purview of those claiming expertise, but also those steeped in dread and reactionary ignorance. It is important then to understand that functionally there is little difference between Austrian neo-nazis who killed four people in a Roma settlement in Oberwart by planting a bomb behind a sign reading “Gypsies, go back to India” in 1994[5] and the legitimate operations of Police in Budapest who have turned Roma-populated districts into effective border zones by doubling patrols and 'randomly' checking IDs[6]. While awareness of the Roma plight today is undoubtedly increasing, there is also a counter-tendency to sublimate this issue under rubrics of sanitation, safety, and the alleged protection of children. This rhetoric echoes identical claims of Control in the past but it may appear fresh today or even reasonable in contrast to the extreme destruction of the Nazi-era or the murderous incitements of young fascists in our own period. We must be vigilant, however, not to draw too deep a separation between the extreme and the banal. The historical arc of anti-ciganism relies on both for its continuation. Anti-ciganism is hegemonic, it sets the limits of the discussion and it trends towards a transcendent violence that nationalizes, thus naturalizes, the ruling ideas of this age. While contemporary critical authors on the subject today call for an end to extremism and a strengthening of liberal democratic institutions (Stewart 2012:III) I would call on writers to cease this artificial separation between extremism and liberalism and begin to focus on the political-economy of Control and racism as a foundational element in statecraft as well as a key site of class-struggle.

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[5] Toninato, Paola. The Making of Gypsy Diasporas. *Translocations: Migration and Social Change*. 2009. 2.

[6] The author lived on Népszínház utca for several years in Budapest where he witnessed this daily.

[i/D] Methodology

Direct action and militant ethnography: methodological reflections

Miloš: "I see now that you are equally a soldier and a scientist"

Me: "That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me..."

I presented many of the ideas and cases in this dissertation at a conference at Cornell University in 2015 called, "exile and enclosure". The conference was an implicitly radical undertaking to anthropology rise or store size whatever liberational potential might exist in the concept of "exilic spaces", many of the results of which can be found in this very dissertation. At the end of my presentation, a Cornell doctoral student challenged my ethnographic methodology, claiming it had sacrificed far too much objectivity and asked whether or not my very open stance of solidarity in the Roma settlement and with the anarchists might not have hurt scientific viability of my study. I responded that I respected the problem and pressed that much of the data most salient to anthropological research came from my ethnographic treatment of direct action. I proposed that the proliferation of conflicts in drawing and redrawing of new social boundaries and relationships through a direct commitment of solidarity and action with my subjects opened up new possibilities for the kinds of data available to the ethnographic researcher. On the question of objectivity, I had nothing particular to add but many in the room with me, largely members of the militant ethnography section of the American anthropological Association, dismissed all concerns for objectivity out of hand, implying such concerns were archaic at best and anachronistic worst. While I cannot say that I share my colleague's instinctive dismissal of objectivity, I see my work very much in line with theirs.

Militant ethnography is a relatively recent position in anthropology that seems to come from a rather diverse heritage extending from Antonio Negri to Nancy Scheper-Hughes. Scheper-Hughes' assertion that "cultural relativism is no longer appropriate to the world in which we live" launched a resurgence in activist anthropology's in America (1995:409). Her call for a "militant anthropology" coincided with an upsurge in attention to the oppressive conditions of women in the Third World. These coincided, perhaps ironically, with the centralization of such issues in the public sphere, particularly on the part of the Democratic Party and their justification for both sanctions and military aggression around the world. Scheper-Hughes' call for militant anthropology became rather suspicious in the light of this state of affairs when anthropological fascination combined with military interventions in an increasingly public conversation. I found nothing at the time in militant anthropology that would suggest a structural barrier to these kinds of interventions. Without a significant critical apparatus, Scheper-Hughes' call dovetailed quite nicely with the general environment of liberal militancy in America at the time.

The anarchistic intervention in this discourse came from quite a different direction. The Argentinian 'Colectivo Situaciones' calls for research to "be inside of certain practices" and linked with a diverse set of other social nodes in a shared practice of "political discourse" (2007:73). Research, for them, was to be taken away from the domain of universities and political leaders and must instead be carried out by those who are themselves struggling to create change in the streets. They argue that research militancy must focus on the *potencia* of subjects to create new experiences as experiments in moments of struggle which the collective identifies as "situations". Antonio Negri picked up this call and used it to expand on his ideas about the "multitude" and the creation of alternative forms of democracy. Negri saw, similarly to what I argued to my colleague at the conference, that the most important data source for the multitude in its epochal confrontation against capitalism and its order was that which arises from conflict with those forces. He, along with Colectivo Situaciences, points to the dualistic nature of praxis as both experience and experiment, arguing that participating in conflict and sharing those experiences and engenders a cohesive methodological program that focuses not only on the world as it appears in the moment and its distance from our learned ideals about it, for instance studies into why workers aren't striking and adopting their historic role in the passage to communism, but on the potential for social actors to create new moments from their pre-existing conditions as they appear to themselves. "That is to say," writes *Colectivo Situaciones*, "how to work from the power (*potencia*) of what is and not of what 'ought to be?'" (2007:84)

In turn, Andrej Grubačić has challenged social researchers to recall the practice of 'accompaniment' following his studies of the Zapatistas and the Industrial Workers of the World (Lynd and Grubačić 2009). This practice, once the purview of political agitators in the industrial working class, demands that those who wish to understand the social conditions of the target group must work alongside or with that group, including in their political struggles. The centrality of accompaniment in militant ethnography, though not in precisely those words, has been publicly championed by anthropologist Jeffrey Juris. Juris' ethnographic work on the US social forum as well as the movement for social resistance in Barcelona makes the tactical tactile (2007). He shows, through active participation in relatively militant political groups, that one cannot hope to fully grasp the value or workings of such groups without being engaged in their organization or activities. David Graeber and Stevpven Shukaitis see militant research as a way to map "the archipelago of rupture" wherein distinct but comparable acts of collective resistance can be connected over space and time into a single general struggle about what's each island has much to teach the other (2007:32). In their introduction to the definitive edited volume on the subject, Graeber and Shukaitis assess the gulf between knowledge production through praxis and the academic understanding of such practices, or lack thereof, claiming that the dearth of critical theory in the contemporary Academy, as compared to the cornucopia of it that came from the post-'68 line of French theorists, is essentially the symptom of an ongoing allergy to praxis within the Academy itself (28). They claim that the most salient critical theory has always risen from radical practice and while radical actors tend to be well versed in the academic discussions around these theories, the Academy maintains a willful ignorance about the nature of practice among those very practitioners (*Ibid.)*. Graeber and Shukaitis look to militant ethnography to revive the Academy's dormant critical faculties (*Ibid.)*.

In my reading, militant ethnography is a critical advance on the militant anthropology of Nancy Scheper-Hughes on the one hand, and a sort of problematic repatriation of the militant research program back into the Academy from whence it escaped. I agree with and am wholeheartedly inspired by the calls of Graeber, Grubačić, Juris and others to centralize overt praxis as a part of ethnographic knowledge production, but I remain cautious about the inherent paradox in the enshrinement of iconoclasm. Can one truly act in militant solidarity within the most official and sacred of all institutions of knowledge production? What does militant ethnography offered to studies of subjects who do not see themselves as part of a global mobilization and eschew their identity as part of a mass in favor of one which promotes incommensurability, willful misrecognition, and centralizes severance and rejection over mass appeal as do my subjects? Combining direct action and ethnography does not always, for me, expressed the voices of the multitude, but has found itself in direct confrontation with the very idea of the mass, rejecting a scalar imagination altogether. Indeed, my research suggests that the primary enemy of my research subjects is itself a kind of social movement: "Control".

Collected data and collective data

Judith Okely, a pioneer in contemporary ethnographic research of Gypsies, alluded to her research methodology as on "knowing without notes" (2008:55). This suggestive phrase refers to the consequences of her political commitment to her research subjects relative to the English police state. She realizes the potential danger that ethnographic notes pose to legally and socially problematic subjects like gypsy caravans in the UK. The existence of those notes forces the anthropologist to choose a side; Okely chose the Gypsies. Moreover, her work suggests a preeminence of time over the quality of recorded fieldnotes, citing the numerous occasions where subjects who seem marginal and unimportant at the time and go under mentioned and without detail in fieldnotes can prove surprisingly central and axial figures in the field as time goes on. This holds especially true with closed or endangered social groups, especially those who maintain an inimical relationship to state legibility. As this paper studies both 'Gypsies' and 'anarchists', detailed personal data is seen as something of a liability by both. Moreover, a deep understanding of the realities of power and conductivity in these groups would never have been apparent to me had I only stayed the one year expected of a contemporary ethnographer in the field. Only after over three years of participant observation and direct action have long hidden relationships in struggles made themselves apparent to me, and continue to do so as of this writing.

Like Okely, I have maintained an ambivalent relationship with my fieldnotes and have offset much of this burden onto my collective. While maintaining my own personal collection of detailed fieldnotes that I would write following particularly significant occurrences or revelations, it is really the shared record of the Koko Lepo collective that is proven my greatest resource in the ethnography of Inex, Deponija, and the collective itself. Constant discussions over our own observations are revived weekly in meetings and are inevitably the subject of deep reflections when any two collective members find themselves in the same room. The knowledge base built from Koko Lepo's collective direct action into Deponija and in the Inex squat acts as a constantly refreshed and living archive of first-hand experience and recorded struggles that have, along with my personal experiences, proven an immeasurably valuable fountain for the production of this text. So, like Okely I have endeavored not to endanger my research subjects through my own methods of data collection and have found that the time I've spent connected to these sites has far outweighed the value of my early fieldnotes, detailed as they initially were. Unlike Okely, however, I have not worked in a condition of advocacy *for* my subjects but have instead worked in one of direct action *with* my subjects which has opened up the possibility of the collective ethnographic record that can be maintained, challenged, and checked as part of a common effort. Therefore, I feel this work answers many of the challenges that Okely had long-ago raised when dealing with Gypsies in Europe, as well as some of the blindsides in militant ethnography in dealing with groups that are less than comfortable with the idea of the 'multitude'. While the end result is a single authored monograph written by one voice, the intersection of direct action ethnographic knowledge production through working in an autonomous collective has strengthened the validity of my research base by allowing the creation not only of fieldnotes, but of considerable archives of experiential and experimental data.

My most valuable data from these archives exists in the form of narratives of participants in Inex, Deponija and within Koko Lepo. Narrative data, following the work of Charles Briggs (1983), arises from interactions between the ethnographer and the informant and produces information beyond mere factual details; it includes operative logics, emotional weight, and perhaps more importantly, expressions of optimism and pessimism, trust and betrayal, so vital for establishing individual worldviews. Lila Abu-Lughod (1985) and again Okely (2007) placed a primacy on emotional weight in the process of data collection, a view which has consistently resonated in my own collection process, within a generally interpretive framework which seeks the gaps between hegemonic ideological frames and an individual's self-positioning therein. Indeed, the nihilistic agency of many of my friends in Deponija discussed in chapter 2 only became apparent to me through interactions weighted by emotional quality. Like Abu-Lughod, I see in this process a way to rescue agency from presumptions of victimization without sacrificing either.

Abu-Lughod's insistence on the presence of emotion in ethnographic work is especially interesting given her own feminist positionality; her exciting and confrontational article, "Writing Against Culture" (1991), published during the height of post-modernity's influence in anthropology, inveigles a call to favor "strategies, interests, and improvisations" over homogenizing cultural claims. Here, she accepts the basic motivations behind the post-modern obsession with writing culture and transcends them by advocating for a research that honestly accounts for the researcher's specific social position relative to her subjects and to the world in general. She then urges a 'particularistic' approach to ethnography that wards of generalization by attuning to the ways in which macro forces express themselves in local particularities. While this, at first blush, appears to put Abu-Lughod's methodological framework in concert with Micahel Burawoy's 'global ethnography', later texts reveal a closer proximity to Scottish anthropologist and left-Marxist figure, John Holloway. Like Holloway, Abu-Lughod sees in ethnographic research, a potential to expose the limits of power by doing particularistic, interpretive ethnographic work with groups dedicated to resisting hegemonic forces. Abu-Lughod goes even further, however, and suggests that non-Romanticized ethnographies of groups of resistance actually provide a "diagnostic of power", through their struggles, the "intersecting and often conflicting structures of power" take shape (1990:45). Thus, as with the militant ethnographers above, Abu-Lughod's feminist particularism finds value in conflict, but with a special emphasis on the anthropology of power that is rather understated in more Romantic accounts of resistors. Her methodological prescriptions have been instrumental in shaping my work with Deponija and Inex, just as the militant ethnography paradigm has helped me conceive of my work inside Koko Lepo.

Where this research stands out, however, is in the centrality of direct action, the anarchist commitment to creating politics through autonomous collective action in real-time as opposed to through institutionally legible pathways. David Graeber's action-oriented style of participant observation is particularly well-situated to interrogating the subtle social impediments to neoliberal penetration in a given locale as well as more radically active strategies of organized resistance. Indeed, anthropologist John Clarke's (2008) concern for finding where neoliberalism does not exist, as opposed to claiming it victor over all of human life as for which he faults Hardt and Negri (2000), might have been partially answered by taking direct action more seriously. Graeber's *Direct Action* (2009) examines the “spaces of democratic innovation” forced open by the radical rupture that he identifies as direct action. Much of my research in the InexFim squat is genealogically linked to Graeber's work; my narrative of the battle between the 'anarchists' and the 'apoliticians' of Inex is almost entirely centered on moments of confrontation and social rupture brought on by direct action. Unfortunately, Graeber has little to offer in my effort to conceive of my work inside Deponija as a member of the Koko Lepo collective. Of course, it was the relationship of direct action between myself and the residents of the settlement that so troubled our poor doctoral candidate at the opening of this section.

Since the basis of my relationship with Deponija was through a collective based on direct action, it can fairly be said that most, if not all of my ethnographic findings about the settlement are somehow linked to moments of direct and confrontational political engagement. As should be apparent in the chapter on the Koko Lepo collective, direct action was typically alongside settlement members in conflict with the various faces of Control in Belgrade. Direct action entailed a willful and disruptive intervention in the normal operations of society is expressed through the hegemonic narrative of neoliberalism as well as the material forces and constraints at the heart of it. Koko Lepo is one such example in this dissertation, and the free shop another, each using direct action to reveal the connective tissue holding together global structural powers and their local expressions by attempting to incise these tissues and grow new ones in novel forms. Direct action does produce spaces for democratic innovation, following Graeber, but more importantly it produces conflict and resistance. The ethnographic salience of direct action is revealed in this resistance as a "diagnostic" of the forces that push back.

A final point about data collection concerns the delicacy of investigating radical actors engaged in any sort of pitched struggle. While, technically speaking, multi-sited-ethnography (Marcus 1995) and the '*verstehen*' participatory research program are prerequisite models for a project such as this which can severely problematize the political dynamics of the field. Here I take quite seriously Paul Routledge's “relational ethics of research” designed specifically for movements which directly confront capitalism and authoritarianism from more militant platforms (2009:82). He outlines four necessary precautions and moral strictures for carrying out what he calls “anarchistic” research: [1] send previous works to your “resisting others” of study before requesting their aid in the field, [2] collaborate closely with the resisting other on the research of them by integrating them into the research process, [3] collaborate closely with the resisting other in their field of struggle by integrating yourself into their activities and interests, and finally [4] allow oversight of the final product by the resisting other and encourage them to take part in their own ultimate representation. This is not only to ensure the integrity of the evidence as narrated by the anthropologist, but also to ensure that the release of such data does not put the researcher's subjects in danger.

I cannot say that I have been able to meet Routledge’s standards in all instances of this three year project of research and direct action, though I have tried my damnedest to do so. Being a co-creator of my own field of study adds an element of tension to the documentation and reportage of the struggles therein. For instance, the regular appearance of the figures named “Gricko” and “Đura” in chapters one and three, though part of the same general project of myself, occupy a distinctly antagonistic and inimical position in my narrative and so could not be collaborative partners in it. Furthermore, the distance between academic and popular narrative styles makes the final oversight mandated by Routlege’s fourth point a tricky issue. I have worked with, and am forever indebted to, my comrades in the Koko Lepo collective for their careful readings of much of my past work and their critical comments and corrections of it, but most of my comrades in Deponija have, by necessity, been left out of the editing process. My Serbian, while functional enough for conversations, interviews, and collective meetings from which much of my data was gleaned, lacks the necessary nuance to explain highly esoteric anthropological concepts to a settlement where even basic literacy is lacking. I have endeavored whenever possible to introduce my project to my friends in the settlement, and I must thank the parent referred to here as “Ervin” most of all for his attention and understanding, but I am not able to say that there is a general understanding of this project in Deponija at all. Of course, as my work continues there, I intend to close this gap, but by the writing of this dissertation we must be content with the knowledge that I have done what I could to inform people there that I was writing about them and the Koko Lepo project and that their answers to my questions would be employed to these ends. Furthermore, testimonies like that of Anastasija’s in chapter recounting conversations with our young friends there have been handled as Anastasija’s alone, not the girls who opened up to her. This is certainly the grayest ethical zone my writings venture into and I am very sensitive to this problem, but I wish to emphasize the intimacy of our collective’s internal dynamics and those of our collective to our young friends in the settlement. I followed up the story with the girls who originated it both to confirm it and ask after its eventual results and their response was no less detailed and enthusiastic than that which they gave to Anastasija, though I have chosen to use her record instead of my own due to the richness and emotional immediacy present in her telling as well as its topical turn towards gender and power that were not present in their communication with me, their fumbling American male comrade – the quintessential ethnographic dunce asking the most obvious and basic of questions.

So, let’s begin...

Chapter I: InexFilm

Inex Interexport

Field site description [A]
The sacred political [B]
Structural power [C]
Tactical power [D]

[I/A] Field site description

An introduction to the InexFilm squatted social and cultural center of Belgrade and the enduring struggles therein

Welcome to InexFilm

When I first came to Inex, a reclaimed industrial space in the ‘working-class’ Karaburma neighborhood of Belgrade, to visit my anarchist friends in February of 2012, it was still a ruin. It's defining characteristics were chaos and lack: missing walls, a paucity of electricity, and a mysterious room upstairs stacked wall-to-wall with office chairs. On the concrete door frame of what would eventually become Infoshop Furija was a large-print piece of graffiti reading 'ACAB' in crude letters. Surprised at my ignorance of its meaning, I was told by my future comrades that it was an acronym for 'All Cops Are Bastards', one used frequently by nationalist football hooligans and antifascist anarchists alike in Belgrade. It was novel for me, as was the anti-fascist struggle and, really, almost everything dealing with squatting and radical politics in Serbia.

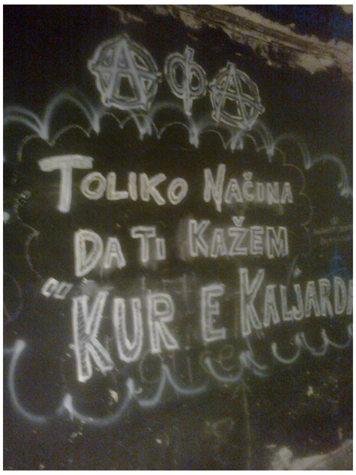

Illustration 3: Grafitti in front of the Furija Infoshop in InexFilm: [Serbian] "So many ways to tell you" [Romani] "Fuck the police!"

Three years later, I would find myself in that same hallway painting "*kur e kaljarda*", Romani for "fuck the police" only a few feet away from the expensive and heavy Infoshop door leading to our brightly colored and fully operational center for anarchism and antifascism in Belgrade. Lord Kastro, the Romani-language rapper from Niš, sent me an SMS with the correct spelling and Aki, Marko and I stumbled over its pronunciation as the infoshop’s bookshelves shook with South African club music – Marko's own playlist. Three years of comradeship, experimentation, and organizing blended with three years of conflict, failures, and betrayals, the residue of which fueled this particularly productive night of boozing, bookshelf organizing, and painting. When we finished, we had shown the opposition in Inex, a loosely assembled section of the squat’s ‘cultural’ element, whom we often referred to as “the fucking artists”, that three years of putting up with them had only made us more aggressive and less diplomatic. By the end of the night, a painterly “Fuck the landlord” would be spattered across the gate to ‘the club’ and slogans from the Parisian streets of May, 1968 would be found scattered throughout the building in white paint pen.

Over these three years, I watched this long-abandoned film distribution warehouse grow into a social and cultural hub for Belgrade's 'alternative' scene. From the outside, the place appeared a lively intermingling of artists and activists collectively maintaining a unique space just outside the center of the city. The situation was, in fact, significantly more complex. “[InexFilm] has an interesting internal dynamic,” said long-time user Milan Škobić in an aborted documentary on the autonomous kindergarten Koko Lepo, “there are a lot of quarrels and fights and conflicts, but in spite of all that, people somehow function.” This view was somewhat optimistic; Inex was suffering a cold war for most of my tenure there. Those of us who were interested in anti-authoritarian and anti-fascist politics in the space, referred to by most as “the anarchists”, a term I will retain in this writing, had fought the so-called “fucking artists”, an ill-defined smattering of reactionaries who shared a common origin myth of the squat, for years over spaces and as well as the very meaning of the InexFilm project itself. As I will elaborate, this reactionary strata was as much an invention and imposition of the anarchists as it was a reflection of actual agencies.

A number of other grouped agencies could be found between them and us: the optimistic ‘mediator strata’, an independent gallery collective who rarely came to the squat meetings, and a section of the squat that we anarchists would pigeonhole into the epithet “the hippies” or “the idiots” depending on their alliances at the time. Power was the ever present engine of identity and voice, and naming practices which began as provocations would eventually evolve into, or be compelled to become, warring political entities complete with emic semiotic orders and visual inscriptions of space in the form of anti-fascist stickers, glowing painted snails, ‘Art Brut’ sculptures, and all manner of claims over tools, materials, and rooms. Some of these divisions predated my arrival in the squat as a regular user, though I will try to reconstruct their formation as best I can as well as connect the Inex microcosm of political struggle with the city from which, I argue, it was carved in an act of political sacrifice.

InexFilm was the brainchild of the of a loose collective of “right to the city” Marxist urbanists and figures from the alternative cultural scene of Belgrade; they had envisioned an autonomous squat where artist and activists could engage together on a common project and, in so doing, politicize the Belgrade art scene while simultaneously making the radical political scene more accessible. One hand, so to speak, would wash the other. The building was finally squatted in 2011 under the impression that it was still State property; this was not true. InexFilm had been privatized some time earlier, but as luck would have it, the owner had neither the intention nor legal support to use the space as commercial property for the next few years. He was apparently unpurturbed by its temporary cooptation by artists and merely asked that no-one live in it and that we walk away quietly when it came time to tear it down. This was in no way a contract, simply a casual understanding framed by structurally-motivated disinterest and, possibly, choosing to have educated young people occupy the space instead of the “junkies” which, according to local histories, had previously used the structure to self-medicate.

Neither the original squatters nor the owner would see their hopes met, and both fell out of contact with those who would eventually come to make the space their own. The Marxist-urbanists invited the anarchists to join the project in the Winter of 2011, when several members of the Zrenjanin Antifascist Festival and the autonomous anarchist space ‘Krs’ attended the squat’s first new year’s party. Convinced by some anarchist comrades from Berlin to accept the invitation, the early infoshop collective proposed their idea for the space in a Spring assembly meeting and was granted a large and entirely dilapidated room downstairs. One extant user objected, invoking his experience living in the famous Christiana mega-squat in Copenhagen and saying that, “Inex must not have an infoshop because we don’t want any kinds of shops there.” Instead of explaining that an infoshop is not a for-profit endeavor but a space for the practice of radical anti-authoritarian politics and the distribution of information through texts and events, another ‘cultural’ user responded, “But they’re so nice!” This would be the last time the anarchists would be called “nice” for many years.

Far from becoming politicized through squatting, most of the ‘cultural-users’ of the space, those who insisted on Inex being a cultural space, managed to depoliticize the space to such a degree that few among them or their sympathizers could be found three years later referring to the place as a squat at all, demanding even that anti-fascist propaganda be banned from the public spaces of the building. The 'anarchists', in their turn, entrenched themselves deeper through symbolically violent and, as I will argue below, effectively sacrifical interventions that reinforced the political character of the squat. By the time I was proficient enough in Serbian to get the gist of the weekly assembly meetings, it became clear that there were two distinct InexFilms making irreconcilable claims to the same space. This conflict would spill over into the operations of Koko Lepo several times, each time with greater severity than the last.

Illustration 4: Entrance and street-facing side of InexFilm

This chapter attempts to account for the social dynamics and struggles of the InexFilm squat observed over a two-year period of participant observation and direct action. Here, I introduce a frame based on 'the sacrifice' that will return throughout the dissertation, increasing in complexity with each pass. As InexFilm is an intentional heterotopia of rupture from capitalism and the state, an 'exilic space' in the words of Andrej Grubačić and Denis O'Hearne (2016), it offers a relatively simple and concrete way to conceptualize the sacrifice as a political act in an almost entirely localized framework. Whereas the rest of this dissertation jumps scales between the local and global with great frequency, the heterotopic nature of InexFilm offers a unique re-scaling, setting up the scalar dialectic between the space itself and city it ruptures. Beyond exploiting these scalar limits to introduce the sacrifice as an anthropological theme, Inex is also a rich study in power and the cultural expressions thereof. After a decidedly non-interpretive argument for a sacrificial approach to political identification, I will construct an essentially Geertzian interpretive interrogation of InexFilm's complex webs of significance over the scaffolding of Eric Wolf's categorization of power, focusing especially on its “structural” and “tactical” manifestations. Through this process, I expect the reader to observe, through the process of cutting away and condemnation in the sacrificial mode, group identities crystallize as organized expressions of position within the quotidian struggles in the squat and admire the rich expressions of this process in a variety of forms and within various fields.

As with the rest of Part I of this dissertation, this chapter is also about ethnography. I strongly support the intermingling of ethnographic work and direct action. From this position, I access more than the mere fact of struggle, but can personally attest to the weight of its expression as well. While I have chosen to narrate the primary struggle in the InexSquat between 'anarchists' and 'the artists', this might rightly be objected to as too broad, ahistorical, and insensitive to the particularities of each of these groups, not to mention the fact that many members of each side would not qualify as either label by any definition. Similarly, the presence of the word 'gypsy' is also problematic, though I would argue no more problematic than the word 'Roma' and certainly equally as incomplete as 'urban collector'. My reasons for adopting these terms have everything to do with an emic appropriation of the language of struggle. These groups *were made ahistorical* in the enactment of warfare. In order to work within the field of tactical power, assumptions about interests had to be embodied and collectivized at the same time. If, on the first day of Inex, every person was spoken to as an individual, by the fourth year, individuals were only the expression of groups and were made to carry with them both the interests of those groups as well as there many sins. We were often referred to in blanket terms as "anarchists", a collective interest associated with rudeness and isolation, just as we returned the favor with "fucking artists", implying careless egomania and sociopolitical ignorance, both incomplete, both meant to objectify and reify the social reality of our divisions while those poor souls struggling to maintain neutrality and individuality were thrown under a bus called "the hippies". Perhaps only Mirko, a professional artist living outside the city and commuting regularly to the squat, managed to be both active and respected by all as a neutral participant. Even Milan Škobić, the young academic turned skilled moderator, was inevitably considered a sell-out by one or another side at various times in his Inex career.

Škobić's take?

> We would go to your room and disagree with you on something then we would go to the artists and disagree with them. And then [Mirko] and I were in the mood "stupid you" and "stupid them". but honestly now I'm in the mood to say that it put some cracks in my idea about everything being possible to be mediated. It seems to me I had some ideas like, "People, come on! It's not like your differences are unimportant, but you can overcome them somehow!" And now I'm probably more skeptical in a sense like, "Fuck you, get in a proper fight if you hate each other so much!"

What follows is the multi-axial struggle that denied mediation, culminating into proper fights as well as symbolic conflicts and unresolved class antagonisms that shaped the social relations of this historic urban endeavor.

[I/B] The sacred political

Political subjects are created through sacrificial acts and violence, the nature of which has consequences for the political character of the subject itself

Heterotopia as Sacrifice, the Capitalist State as Pollution

Let us open the problem of the sacrifice by beginning with its severing function in the creation of a sacred space and bring it to bear on both ‘left’ and ‘post-left’ analyses of space in capitalism. In his essay “The Logic of Sacrifice” (1976), Edmund Leach argued that the function of sacrifice was establish, via dramatic ritual practice the “Other World of Experience Reversed”, to be held in contrast to “This world of temporal experience”. “This world”, as it were, is one characterized by “impotent men” who empower themselves through the sacrificial port to the “Other World”, the world of the purified “Ghost Soul”. The world that remains, This World, is consequently indicted as 'polluted'. Later in this dissertation we will also meditate on the assertions of Michael Lambek that the crux of sacrifice is not the liminal recapitulation of the social order, but the act of beginning and rupturing itself, though I ask that the reader merely keep the fact of disruptive agency in mind as we continue along an otherwise structural-functionalist path[7]. Despite the psychedelic overtones, there is much of squatting in Leach’s understanding of sacrifice. Through the rupture in normal urban life that is political squatting, a space is removed from the reign of commodification and State protection, from the impotency of This World, which is renounced in that same turn. Capitalism is a world of pollution and waste; turning its waste into something productive and socially deep in contradistinction to its world of origin elucidates the failures of the hegemonic value form of capitalist life: the commodity. There is a profound disjuncture between the legal existence of the space as private property and its social and cultural value as an autonomous collective project and space of freedom. The further the distance between these points, the filthier and the more dangerous the one becomes to the other. These are worlds unto themselves.

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[7] All apologies to the late Edmund Leach whose disputes with Raymond Firth over the limits of the structural-functionalist approach are not forgotten.

Illustration 5: Children line up in front of the entrance of Inex

Thus, it is no accident that entering InexFilm had all the feeling of entering a portal to another world, and one appropriately decorated with large swaths of color patterned by mountains of painted skulls. As your eyes slowly adjust to the darkness at the threshold of the underworld, you are immediately confronted by the simultaneity of its rough aesthetic brutality and its delicate intricacy of design. At the entrance of the long hall, you meet the brightly colored Koko Lepo kindergarten naturally lit by large windows. At the other extreme of the hall, all light vanishes entirely and you stumble, hands outstretched, into a black-lit cement club covered in glowing painted snail shells and dismembered mannequin parts; here is experience reversed.

But how far shall we take this? Were we, in fact, *sacrificing* the space as a means of empowerment against the structured impotency offered to us by This World? I cannot but say, “Yes!”. Lefevbre identifies the defining characteristic of state power as the ability to control the flows of value through and between ‘legible’ spaces in a process he identifies as the “State Mode of Production” (2008:96). The State produces space through territorialization and interconnectivity, hierarchizes space through hegemonic control over the values therein, and finally reproduces homogeneous conceptions about space within the minds of its users (95). The antagonist in the State's metanarrative of spatial homogeneity is private interest which, through the marketization of space, pulverizes the homogeneous topography into lots, the purpose of which is only partially determinable by State authority. The State meets capitalism in both “collision” and “collusion” (97). The basis upon which “users” experience this divine dialectic between powers distant and great is, however, is very simply impotency. “Unless they revolt,” warns Lefevbre, “'users are reduced to passivity and silence”; he advises, aptly, the creation of “counter-spaces” (99). InexFilm, along with other squats, was indubitably a “counter-space” in this figuration. An anthropological gaze of the production of these spaces as sacrifices, or in the terms of property, thefts from This World, has much to add to Lefevbre's formulation. He correctly sees these spaces as sites of resistance but, having already produced a cohesive critique of his own, Lefevbre seems less interested in the power to indict and condemn through their creation and in their own vernacular.

Problematically, Lefevbre has difficulty thinking beyond the State, suggesting that at the end of the revolution, “the state would be able to maintain certain functions, including that of representation” in a special “reorganized social space” where it would be “oriented against the global firms” (2008:111). This limitation necessarily silences, or at least de-legitimates, the claims and demands of autonomism in counter-spaces like Inex. The problem this poses is simple; if not the state's power to dominate, produce, and order spaces, what shall these “counter-spaces” counter? The 'sacrifice' of State or private property does not declare only one or the other “polluted”, but the “collusion” of the two gods in a single hegemonic pantheon becomes an inalienable collaboration whose very existence is inimical to the Inex project. In interview, even the most apolitical of my informants saw

Inex as exceptional or in opposition to the State and capitalism, however diversely they understood it.

The Other World is of “experience reversed” in which the impotent becomes the potent; it is neither the State nor Capital who suffer impotency in This World. One of the most enduring struggles within InexFilm has been about pollution from State collusion as much as the pulverization of capitalism. This has been accomplished, much to the credit of the anarchist element in the squat and their sympathizers, and at the expense of the desires of a number of problematic private users. The squat’s persistence in making all events donation-only, rejecting the interference of capitalist firms, turning away NGOs from the general assembly in all but a minority of cases, collectively agreeing to never call the police or invite them into the building[8] have all been hard-won tactics to keep the squat firmly in the realm of the sacred. Thus, even those non-anarchist users who were uncritical of the intervention of outside authorities in particular instances, say those involving theft or real violence, still spoke as though Inex was a “little society” or even an “alternative State”, one informant clarifying in the former example that “Artists don’t like the State either!” Absent the State, then, what was Inex’s social basis?

The Other World of InexFilm conceptually co-operates with Foucault's notion of the *heterotopia*. Both he and Lefevbre credit the heterotopia as severing the world in which it occupies but Foucault also tasks it with the worlds' inversion. It exists as a sort of 'somewhere else' right inside the 'here' as a contestation as well as an inversion; the commonalities with Leach's Other World should be apparent. Foucault compares it to a sort of utopian effect inherent in the mirror:

> In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. (1967:4)

Foucault's conception of the heterotopia is, predictably, structural and deterministic in its nature. He identifies two kinds of heterotopia: *crisis heterotopias* associated with primitive society – menstruation huts, honeymoons, and other places of liminality, and *deviation heterotopias* associated with modernity – retirement homes, insane asylums, and other places to house inhabitants who can no longer ‘fit in’. While he does say that these places perform some kind of critical function as inversions of hegemonic society, he is quick to add that they tend to have discrete functions which work *for* that society: cemeteries, hospitals, libraries, and gardens are all included in his theoretical apparatus. He does not mention, in his analysis, heterotopias which specifically function as a place of emancipation and condemnation of that society. Places where the inversion is not merely a critique because of its structural position in the social machinery, but a place which is structured specifically *as* a critique by conscious, reflexive agents. InexFilm would, for the most part, qualify in this unmentioned third category, one that neatly conforms to an emerging attention to “exilic spaces” attended to below.

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[8] This agreement was finally solidified after several users did exactly that, and were reprimanded for it.

Lefevbre's “heterotopy”, by contrast, is given a more revolutionary program as a dialectical force against the centralizing “isotopy” of spatial production (2003:128). David Harvey sees in Lefevbre's heterotopy something “foundational for the defining of revolutionary trajectories” (2012:xvii). Both view these spaces, however, less as sites of conscious agency but more fatalistically, as perhaps entirely predictable fuel for the historical evolution away from capitalism through the dialectical process (Lefevbre 2012:172). As such, both writers seem to view the problem of space as one, not of autonomy, but rather of democratic management on a large scale through state intervention; in Harvey's words, the goal of revolutionary urban reclamation must be “the state itself brought into democratic control” (2007). There are significant shortfalls to this claim in connection with heterotopic spaces given the proliferation of anarchist autonomous centers throughout the world, the anarchist intervention in Inex being only one of countless similar undertakings.

Lefevbre's connection of heterotopy to otherworldliness, on the other hand, is quite salient to the issue of InexFilm (2003:128). An interpretive-structural approach to Inex yields interesting results. It allows us to see the space as a structural outcome of State and capitalist machinations as well as a functional meaning for that scheme; its meaning as a general indictment determines the activities it engages in. Choices about who to invite for performances, presentations, or exhibitions, choices about how to distribute income from public events, choices about the kinds of messaging that the space engages in are all judged according to their capacity to indict hegemonic culture. For the least politically minded, this indictment might be a relatively tame commitment to “alternative culture” or even, in one case, “Art Brut”, but for ‘the anarchists’ of the space, this indictment was a direct challenge in which innumerable quotidian activities and ‘normal’ ideas and interactions were forced into an aggressive political field through the collective process. The persistence of InexFilm as a stolen autonomous heterotopia in contradistinction to, in Lefevbre's imagination, the simultaneously homogeneous and fragmented spaces of the capitalist State, does give it a place in its collective body: a thorn. But as a heterotopic inversion of hegemonic society, the values, conflicts, and institutions of the capitalist State are just as much a thorn in the side of Inex.

Andrej Grubačić and Denis O'Hearne's recent efforts to categorize heterotopic ruptures as “exilic” have laid a productive framework for accessing both the potentials and limitations of spaces of “structural escape” (2016:1). As potentials, their analysis largely supports a picture of partial but intentional rejection of the hegemonic roots of capitalism and the state, employing studies of Cossacks, Zapatistas, and American high-security prisons to find powerful moments of breakage and mutual aid as well as exciting spaces of political invention and imagination. As limited organs, however, the authors acutely observe measured practices of compromise and loyalty bargains which, while having a tactical purpose, nonetheless prevent such spaces from creating complete severances. My work at Inex and later in this dissertation with the Koko Lepo collective attends entirely to the constant struggle and acts of sacrifice which delay “recapture” by the host political-economy, an act which InexFilm would fail to prevent with its recapture in 2015, but one which Koko Lepo continues to elude and outwit. It also, however, finds the aforementioned loyalty bargains carried out in holistic practices and modes of being within the squat itself in the form of the uncritical promotion of hegemonic inequities despite constant efforts by 'the anarchists' and others to subvert them. What amounts to a ‘loyalty bargain’ in Grubačić and Hearne’s *etic* analysis might otherwise *emically* be seen only as a struggle to make sacred the ‘exilic’ aspects of groups or spaces against the powerful pressures of the inimical profane.

The anarchists and their understanding of the inimical profane

In this chapter, I repeatedly refer to clusters of people in unifying group terms like “the anarchists” and “the artists” or “the mediator strata”. While these groups congealed and reinforced their boundaries over time, it should never be assumed that they were endemic to the squat itself, like simply another structural element. Even the most well-defined of these groups, the anarchists, arrived at Inex with little or no group boundaries and with a multitude of ideas about who they were and what they wanted. Identity blocks were formed and imposed through ideological bases that were enacted through the cutting away, both imposed by others and accepted voluntarily, of inimical others. These cuts sometimes corresponded to particular class dynamics that mark the borders of the Inex heterotopia and the city beyond, for instance in the movement of the anarchists against patriarchal relations between users or racial forms of exploitation with some users in relation to the neighboring *Deponija* slum, though more often then not they were enacted on the basis of political ideology or positionality.

The anarchist intervention in Inex began with a personal invitation to organizers of the Zrenjanin Antifascist Festival (ZAF) by a few of the original squatters who had more social than artistic plans for Inex. The ZAF invitees themselves invited a handful of friends and comrades from the Belgrade anarchist punk scene, mostly in their mid-to-late 20s, as well as from affiliated group projects, to join them in making an “infoshop”. After an initially cordial and unified construction effort, one which resulted in a space that many users of the squat reportedly felt “jealous” of, the infoshop group broke down over a question of literature and the political character of the space. A dispute over the inclusion of a primitivist text in the zine library took an emotional turn resulting in a number of male organizers rushing to the aid of a female detractor who reportedly lost her composure during a debate with the text’s male apologist. Marinka, reflecting on this period in interview, saw this as an apolitical expression of benevolent sexism. Infoshop organizer Petar concured with this conclusion, adding, “It shows that they didn’t know what they wanted to do or why they were there.” Thus, the infoshop collective became a fully-formed affinity group with a shared mission only after the elimination of apolitical contributors, even though their exodus occurred over a political/theoretical dispute. When I finally joined the infoshop years later, I was surprised to learn that the political unity of the collective had never been precisely formalized, but was established *de facto* through the formal membership of its participants as well as a sort of conspicuous absence of those who had been cut away.

INFOŠOP FURIJA
PROTIV PATRIJARHATA, DRŽAVE I KAPITALIZMA!
A

Illustration 6: Mural inside Infoshop Furija: "Against patriarchy, the State, and capitalism!"

The founders of the squat, as I mentioned above, had intended the space to serve as a bridge between the arts and radical politics. Despite this, numerous actors, whom the ‘anarchists’ commonly decried as ‘fucking artists’ were seen as doing everything they could to push the hegemonic thorn of This World as deep into the social body of Inex as possible, right up to the point when they fled the building in August of 2015. In later interviews, my comrades affirm that without the active participation of the anarchists, Inex could not possibly have maintained a counter-hegemonic political character in Belgrade. In my fieldwork, I was aware of three profane themes by which acts of collusion and collaboration with the inimical political economy of This World of Belgrade laid siege to the project of intentional exile and heterotopic rupture. Though these themes produced intense battles within the squat, no one, not even those the anarchists identified as their primary offenders, ever categorically rejected their threat in principle:

[1] Patriarchy: The issue of patriarchy and its expression in acts of sexism in Inex was, excepting 'the Gricko problem' elaborated on in later chapters, rarely a matter of extraordinary sexism but of normal patriarchy – here defined very simply as the general tendency towards uneven and exploitative gender dynamics in the masculine hegemonic tendencies of everyday life in Belgrade[9]. Relatively banal expressions of sexism were experienced in the weekly assembly meetings of Inex: women's names were often forgotten or mixed-up, women's voices were repeatedly interrupted, and masculine volume often proved the deciding factor in particularly divisive internal debates. Furthermore, the 'DIY' culture of squat work carried with it a subtle but accessible masculinist value, an attachment noted in a number of anthropological studies on the subject. Leading up to the expulsion of a particularly dangerous sexual predator from the squat, the Infoshop held a public discussion on Woman's Day in 2014 about ‘sexism in the movement’ to which several, mostly female, members of the Inex Collective attended. The organizers considered it to be a moderate success. As time passed, however, and the “black bloc” of Inex fell into increasing conflict with the “*l’arte pour l’arte*” element of Inex, and the ideals held so dear by the Infoshop slowly lost currency. “The role of the infoshop changed,” explains Marinka of the collective, “as the people in Inex changed; it was highly respected in the beginning, and in the end it was hated.” Finally, at the end of January, members of the squat posted an advertisement for a party to be held in the lounge area. The ad included references to rollerskating girls in bikinis serving drinks. Predictably, the response to this ad was one of indignation and reproach on the part of the anarchist element, including several members of Koko Lepo, as well as some regular guests of the space who frequent their events. This culminated in a low-level physical and verbal confrontation inside the lounge itself which is remembered by everyone, some with disdain and others with pride, as the night the anarchists “ruined the party”. The confrontation resulted in a series of intense, even ridiculous, assembly meetings complete with the unveiling of a conspiracy to expel the anarchists with private security forces and a dramatic lamentation of supposedly broken friendships between some

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[9] 'Normal' gender perceptions in Serbia embody a generalized idea of political equality tempered by relatively strict binary appeal to aesthetic norms and traditional domestic roles with a fevrent adherence to heteronormative sexual behavior and often religious patriarchy. Sociological studies to this effect include:
Jarić, Isidora. (2006): “Rekonfiguracija hegemonih modela (ženskih i muških) rodnih uloga u procesu transformacije srpskog društva” u: *Filozofija i društvo*, br. 2, 175-190.
Ćeriman, Jelena, *et al.* "Parenting issues in Serbia today" produced in the framework of the project "Gender perspectives in family socialization", financed by RRPP : Western Balkans. Documentary Film.

particularly reptilian cultural-users and the more masculine-looking of the anarchists ranks with whom they often sought to identify. Most impressive, however, was the appeal to compromise embedded inside one Inex member's conception of something he dubbed “positive sexism” – essentially the philosophy of deciding *not* to beat your spouse – for which he sought public moral recognition. In the end, the defense of “free speech” in the promotion of the party imploded and the only lasting result seems to have been the elevation of the issue of sexism and patriarchy once again to fore of InexFilm’s internal culture of struggle.

[2] Racism: As with sexism, the issue of racism in InexFilm was usually one of 'normalized' rather than 'extraordinary' racism; as with patriarchy, stupidity and naivety appeared to be a defining factor in its almost daily expression. At the same series of meetings mentioned above, one 'cultural-user' objected to the 'anarchist' objection to sexists rhetoric at InexFilm by arguing that the anarchists had an unfair position of power in these matters due to their knowledge and experience – how's that for “experience reversed”? He punctuated this point by reminding everyone that no one ever asked him if he was comfortable with Inex being full of “gypsies” on account of the Koko Lepo kindergarten. This same individual also emphasized the tragedy of the ruined party by the fact that “there was even a black person there! Like, black as the earth!” with utmost sincerity. Not that his comments were of any surprise to the anti-authoritarian tendency in Inex. Many in the squat had long been accusing the Roma of *Deponija* of both real and imagined thefts. One particularly nasty member of those the anarchists collectivized as “the fucking artists” even claimed that the Koko Lepo program should be dropped in its entirety because “those [gypsies] can't be helped and there is no point in trying”. If we can judge hegemony primarily by a proliferation of symbols, a consistent ideological character of happenings, and a stranglehold on the conditions of the discussion, than one must credit the anarchists with the hegemonic sway over the issue of racism in Inex despite its pesky persistence within its walls. The vast majority of concerts at Inex were booked by one of two anti-fascist booking collectives, and events which featured participants even suspected of harboring right-wing sentiments were vetoed outright by the anarchist element during Inex meetings. Škobić also credits the role of the mediating strata in the maintenance of an anti-racist hegemonic order. He believes that the neutrality of people like him and Mirko made the demands for anti-racist positionalities appear reasonable. Škobić, among others, faults the anarchists for acting like the “anti-fascist police”, thus provoking a reactionary attitude from the artists that inevitably would express itself in a racist, i.e. socially average, form. Marinka does not put much stock into this interpretation of the anarchists a police presence in Inex. “I think they were stupid hippies,” she says, “we just tried to sabotage their stupid things”. The Other World of Inex maintained an at least outward appearance of anti-racism even while suffering several openly racist assembly members from a camp which increasingly saw itself as a reactionary affinity group of its own, sympathizers of whom, as I will elaborate later, could even be found within the Koko Lepo collective in its own transitional period.

[3] Legalism: Before a consensus on this issue was reached in the winter of 2015, currents of legalism blew through the cold hallways of Inex. Each theft prompted the liberal-individualist elements to bring police into the squat to, predictably, no avail. Most troubling however, was the period of “shitocratic” activity, a term invented by Infoshop member Marko, already referred to in points [1] and [2] above. In this period, a prominent figure in the among the cultural-users and the

origin point of many user’s careers in the squat, Dejan, circulated a petition around InexFilm ostensibly under the pretense of it being delivered to the anarchists to pressure them to give up their violent ways. In fact, this list of names was to be presented to the owner of the property upon which Inex sits as the first step in an ill-conceived squat-wide putsch. As it turned out, Dejan, responding to a long standing animosity with the anarchist element of Inex, had long-ago made arrangements with the owner to allow him to call private security to expel them when the time was right. The owner agreed on the condition that Dejan deliver a list of names to him of everyone in Inex supportive of such a drastic measure. It seems unlikely that the owner cared one way or another about the internal politics of the squat, but the anarchists imagined a number of reasons why he might want the names of its users. The revelation that this was indeed what the petition was for prompted the first formally-established Inex-wide ban on the employment of external forces to handle internal disputes. Nonetheless, another authoritarian figure, Đura, developed a habit in this period of threatening to call the police at each meeting unless the anarchists walk away from the squat entirely. This particular user happened to come from a prominent lawyer family in Krusevac. Assumed by many, considering his background, to be among the richest members of Inex, it was always something of an irony that he took up residence in the squat. Indeed, he himself did not even consider it a squat but justified its existence on the basis of a mythic contract between the artists and the owner, a myth which became dominant in the ‘cultural’ half of the squat in the fourth year. Due in part to this mythology, several from Đura’s emergent sodality sought out the owner at various times to discuss one issue or another until finally the owner invaded Inex and took over a room of his own for the purposes of storage. A break-dancing collective lost their space to a half truck-full of unused construction material. The defense of this invasion on the part of Inex's quisling cultural leadership was, as one might imagine, legalistic; it was the owner's property after all…

I offer the above glimpses, however truncated, as an introduction to the pitched struggle over the sociocultural place of Inex in This World, as well as the 'exilic' tendency to keep it a sacred space free of worldly pollution. Its 'exilic' nature, therefor, is entirely contingent on the agency of its users and was under constant threat of recapitulation into the Belgrade isotopy. Furthermore, even though an argument could be made that InexFilm might have remained a heterotopia even without the anarchist element simply as a collection of DIY artists and party-makers, my three year relationship to the squat, including two years of active participant observation, show that an emancipatory and 'exilic' approach to heterotopic space is in no way compatible with these functionalist heterotopias of Foucault nor the revolutionary Statism of Lefevbre. With some conceptual irony given Leach's apolitical legacy, it is Leach's conception of the sacrifice as an indictment of This World that most suits an anthropological understanding of InexFilm as a heterotopia of emancipation, even if this identity was neither fully formed nor uncontested until quite recently in its history. Having established the sacred borders between the Other World of Inex against This World of Belgrade through the sacrificial act of squatting and identifying profane influences that the anarchists defined themselves and the space in contradistinction to, it is now necessary to elucidate the complex sacrificial mechanism by which group identity was constructed in the sacred squat.

Violence and the sacred in Inex: the profanity of apolitics

The creation of a political object, especially when enacted as an imposition upon unwilling participants as in the case of the Inex “liberals/hippies/fucking artists”, is an act of sacrificial symbolic violence. This should not be taken as an 'interpretive' approach to identification as sacrificial terms were not at all present in the actual discussions or symbols employed to these ends within the squat. Indeed, my comrades and I were not generally aware that we were involved in the creation of discrete identifications at all. That said, I argue that the sacrifice is indeed the most relevant social mechanism in this process despite the pronounced lack of any obvious ritual elements in its exercise. This is not to say that ritualization was entirely absent in the sometimes violent means by which Inex’ political identities were carved and canonized. I lean on the theoretically synthetic work of Catherine Bell whose exhaustive comparative study of anthropological writings on ritual and sacrifice establish the necessary flexibility of the ritual concept for the discipline:

> Ritualization is a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’, and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors. (1997:74)

The identities constructed out of the formless inimical other at Inex appeared to us anarchists as natural externalities, not as internally promoted and enacted techniques of identification. Weekly events such as a vegan potlach dinner, guest lectures, and film screenings were repeated consistently, some of them tied to particular days of the week. Without usually being actively exclusive, these events managed to produce an air of exclusivity thus establishing participants as a political group somehow distinct from their general quotidian associations outside the infoshop door. Those within the squat who never attended these events could only be seen as both naturally inimical to the sacred politics of the infoshop and carriers of the profane, despite the fact that such an identification was the artificial product of our necessarily exclusionary politics.

A recent resurgence in the study of the sacrifice, spearheaded largely by Michael Lambek, has brought a plethora of social phenomena under this slippery rubric. In a recent single volume of *Ethnos* (2014), witchcraft, the Cuban revolution, familial care labor, religious work, and the problem of ‘sovereignty’ is all examined through this single term. Lambek himself attends to an apparent migration of focus on the part of anthropologists from obviously ritualistic forms of sacrifice to those forms which do not lend themselves so easily to the “ritual frame”:

> Put another way, once sacrifice slips from the ritual frame, by what criteria do we acknowledge it? Violence is dangerous and disturbing. One way to respond to it is to call it sacrifice, that is, to say it takes place in the interests of some larger good. (433)

The remainder of this section interrogates precisely the violence of identification that was key to the maintenance of the anarchists’ own “larger good”: establishing Inex as sacred space of political activity.

Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, in their influential text *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions,* are credited with systematizing the ritual sacrifice insomuch as it relates to the foundation or reproduction of the sacred in religious activity. Delineating both the “sacrificer” and the “victim” into active roles in a shared process, they argued that the enactment of the sacrifice by each depended entirely on both agents being already inducted into a sacred mode of activity (1964:19-20). Accepting Lambek’s partial liberation of the sacrifice from the classical framework proposed by Hubert and Mauss, I have already argued that InexFilm was itself a sacred space. Its users, therefore, entered into relations with other users as legitimate actors, accepted and vetted by others as proper to the space itself. Through the process of imposed identification in a political mode, the anarchists set upon their apolitical ‘victims’, here identical to Hubert and Mauss’ “sacrificed”, in order to preserve the space of Inex as a sacred one, albeit ‘politically’ and not ‘religiously’ as Hubert and Mauss would demand. Inex was forced into a political transformation and the human subjects within it into political actors. Inex, having already been made a sacrificial object merely by dint of its being cut-away from the hegemonic property regime of neoliberal Belgrade, could not be otherwise maintained without such transformations.

The profane, here understood as ‘the common and everyday’ along Christine Hayes’ theological definition[10], is fluidal: it adopts the shape of any space or person left ideologically empty, as so many users of the space claimed themselves to be. To the anarchists, the profane is aggressive; it is an interloper creeping through shadowy spaces between the silent and the banal. Naming and illuminating the profane within the squat – “liberals/hippies/fucking artists” – not only reinforced the sacred reality of Inex as an ‘object of sacrifice’, but, in sacrificing the humanity of an emotionally complex, likable, and active voices by assigning them discreet and partially fictionalized political identities and affiliations against their will, constructed a manageable medium between the sacred and profane. Mauss and Hubert’s canonical definition of the sacrifice is built on exactly this process:

> [The sacrifice] consists in establishing a means of communication between the sacred and profane worlds though the mediation of a victim, that is, of a thing that in the course of a the ceremony is destroyed. (Hubert and Mauss 1967:97)

At Inex, this destruction was not merely the result of naming practices, but sometimes took the form of literal attacks on ostensibly neutral artistic productions. At a lounge party in Spring of 2015, an art installation became collateral damage in an ‘anarchist’ bacchanal. Having stripped himself of almost all of his clothing, a close ally and friend of the infoshop accidentally tore-off a piece of plastic sheeting hanging from the ceiling as part of a decorative work. Another ally and member of the Inex theater group, itself closely tied to antifascist and anarchist politics and activities, thought it would be funny to wrap up the original perpetrator in even more sheeting, creating a sort of toga or diaper; it was hilarious. While it is indubitably true that this act contained no forethought whatsoever and was afterwards generally regretted by almost all involved, it was also true that, at the time, most felt vindicated in the act and its humorous value as an expression of politics, crudely assigning the creator of the piece to her new unwanted affiliation as yet one more “fucking artist”. The artist herself happened to be someone that I and others in our general affinity group actually liked and got along with. In an online exchange the next day where I expressed my regret at the

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[10] Hayes, Christine. The Priestly Legacy: Cult and Sacrifice, Purity and Holiness in Leviticus and Numbers. Lecture. October 9, 2006. [https://youtu.be/URMs-17otFE]

destruction of her work but also refused to incriminate my comrades, I promised to help her rebuild the piece with the help of another infoshop ally. She accepted the invitation with grace, but bemoaned the political state of Inex and her place in it:

> I really don't care about all that messy relations between people in Inex, I just want to do my art and to get along with people there.

Unfortunately, it was precisely this commitment to neutrality, to the profane, that made her work a target of opportunity. The anarchists were not against “artists” *per se,* but with the non-politics of mediated peace. My infoshop comrade exclaimed in interview:

> The people who were somehow problematic were not artists: [here she lists three members known to be ‘mediators’]. What are they? They’re not artists!

When I directly asked another comrade from the infoshop what his feelings about the mediators were, he responded:

> Of mediators? Well, for one reason or another I tried to talk with them. I mean, I *did* talk with them constantly like trying to… not to move them to our side but to somehow get them to the point when they would confront the people they also thought were ‘bad’ people.

He goes on to cite an infamous confrontation in an Inex-wide assembly when one prominent mediating voice admitted that she chose the side of the conspiring 'Artist Collective' because she was afraid of them. The anarchists had long assumed this was a powerful motivating factor for such alliances and some, like my comrade above, had hoped to help some of them overcome their fear and convert it, with us, into politics. However, the threat of politics proved far more intimidating to many in the squat than the menacing authoritarianism of the Đura and Dejan, whom no one in later interviews claimed to have had sympathy for at all. Indeed, the destruction of Anna’s work in the lounge was but the third in a series of minor infractions couched in political terms that culminated in her ultimately and paradoxically cementing her bond with the most organized expression of reactionary politics in Inex, the short lived 'Artist Collective' founded by Dejan and Đura.

The basis of the 'Artist Collective' was simple, the anarchists had to go. In their epistemology, the anarchists were, in the words of a mediating observer, “organized and harming their freedom of expression”. In this sense, it was the political certitude of the anarchists that constituted a profane intervention in a sacred space of personal freedom and open expression. According to this same observer, the collective was formed when Dejan approached Đura at an overtly apolitical soiree in the lounge, one in a series of events designed to revitalize what was seen as a lost era of fun and freedom from political concerns. Đura was annoyed that he was being consistently singled out as “sexist and authoritarian”, so Dejan’s plan to arrange a purge of the anarchist elements by private security proved quite appealing. As my conversations with a key organizer of the Inex gallery establish, the artists of Inex did not see the space as inverting or breaking away from Belgrade, but as an a-political sacred space within Belgrade, much like a church, museum, or library. Politics, according to my informants, sits atop of society and intervenes within it; normal people do not produce politics and any pretense to politics between normal people appears authoritarian. Thus, “the anarchist police”, in the words of one of my former colleagues in the kindergarten, had to be removed for the artistic chapel to find peace. The 'Artist Collective', while clinging to a concept of the sacred and profane expressed in terms of freedom versus politics, intended our removal from the space as an act of consecration. In fact, the names that would be attached to their internally circulated petition against us were intended, as I have already mentioned, for the eyes of the property’s owner who would then, it was supposed, give permission for private security to move forcefully against us. For this reactionary collective, the owner retained the power to consecrate and in their mythology, repeated even today by members of the mediating strata, it was he who made the original sacrifice, offering his own property for the sake of art.

Here we meet an anthropological impasse that profoundly impacted the creation of reified political identities in Inex. Did the owner create the sacrificial object of Inex through self-sacrifice or did the anarchists accomplish this through sacrificial victims? Of course, the answer depended entirely on which Inex one claimed. In 2015, Inex was completely divided; two places existing in one building, each incommensurate with the other. Far from creating an equivalency in opposition, however, the mythological self-sacrifice of the owner’s property pales in complexity to the anarchist sacrifice of others for the sake of creating and maintaining a politically sacred space. The key to both lies in the distinction between "transcendent" and "immanent" sacrificial violence.

Immanent violence and the sacrificial process

The sacred is a space of traversal, a safe path for the deliverance of fragile ideals from the imaginary Other World of the future to the hostile This Word of present impotency. Such spaces are carved through symbolic violence, but does this imply an inevitable violence in political separatism? If so, we must deal with the historically undeniable ramifications of new politics based on the ritualistic extermination of others. Are the ‘anarchists’ simply naively replicating the authoritarian purges of Hitler and Stalin alike in a metaphysical microcosm despite their pretensions to anti-fascism and anti-authoritarianism? Richard Wolin (1996) and Alexander Reid Ross (2017), among others, are right to inscribe Georges Bataille into the geneaology of fascism, though they shy from labeling him a fascist as such. His appeals to an aestheticized violence by which, in his writings on animal sacrifice and war, “this world which created limits for the earliest active people is overcome” (Bataille 1998:34) speak directly to Walter Benjamin’s famous identification of the alienating and militant suicidal brutality of fascism as its guiding principle (1968:242). However, the contemporary ethnographic work of Martin Holbraad (2013) making sense of the paradoxically clear dissatisfaction with the Cuban revolution despite their continued devotion to it forces us to reexamine these attractively simple premises. Holbraad specifically takes up the challenge of self-sacrifice, in essence the suicidal tendency of political action, as the very “ontology of the revolution” (2013:365). Far from a naive assessment of the progress of the Cuban revolution, Cuban adherents of the revolution carry their distress and disappointment as sacrificial burdens, consecrating revolutionary politics through its struggle for existence. Self-inflicted violence, even of the structural variety, no more entails a fascist politic than the public execution of Mussolini nor the militant emancipatory activities of the anarchist-federalist militias in Kurdistan today. Before establishing what might separate the violence of fascism and liberalism from the violence of Inex’s anarchists, let us delve deeper into their superficial similarities and consider the double edged sword of symbolic political violence.

The anarchists were seen, even by ourselves, as trouble makers. Certainly, some level of impish mischief and adolescent satisfaction was present in our many acts of disruption, but let us not forget the cost of our "traditional commitment to direct action", as one informant put it. The political tribes of Inex were not, as I mentioned, already present in the building upon my arrival. We created them actively by destroying friendships, banning people and symbols from spaces, imposing our own people and symbols on other spaces, inciting physical violence, however tame, and robbing others of their voices through multiple tactics of delegitimation. Despite the aggressive proactiveness of these attacks, one of my comrades in the Infoshop told me retrospectively that "the people who stayed were more condemned". Our inimical others, for the most part, left an olive branch out for us until almost the very end of the squat, and we, more often than not, chose war, complication, stress, and loneliness over their peace and compromise. We stole from them, yes, thinking that they stole from the commons, but we were not their victims, as my comrade explains, but our own. Indeed, the most bitterly emotional exchange between myself and one of my closest friends and comrades in the infoshop unfurled through a disagreement about whether or not we were a "repressive" force within Inex; I argued in the affirmative but my comrade could not be swayed. We could not be repressive, he claimed, because we did not seek State or State-like power. To be repressive, for my comrade, meant to cease to be anarchist; admitting to repression would be paramount to suicide.

So here, I am left with a difficult task. I argue, along with Georges Bataille, suspected fascist sympathizer, that both the symbolic and 'real' acts of violence that accompanied the reification of political identities in the squat was necessary and unavoidable and *also* anti-authoritarian. However, in doing so, I must rehabilitate Bataille for critical anthropology and anarchism, a risky campaign already launched by Graeber in *Possibilities* (2007). Bataille, it must be said, would reject innocence even in death and would ask no verdict from anyone except "Guilty!" (Richardson 1998:3), but as this text, like all academic texts, requires consecration, a sacrifice must be made; Bataille's living voice must be slaughtered for one god or another, either for the Celtic Cross or the Circle-A. In his own time, neither his opponents among the Surrealists after the first war nor those of the Frankfurt School after the second were able to offer much in the way of a practicable alternative beyond the sphere of media and the arts. Walter Benjamin, his long time critique and occasional comrade can muster only a pronounced ambivalence about Bataille's "sociology of the sacred". Indeed, his own theories of revolutionary violence attest to an unresolved tension in his desire for communicative peace yet his acute awareness of how violent the State's peace can be. Benjamin claims that peaceful civilized agreements can be based on a non-violent understanding of the very real possibility of mutual disadvantage should violence erupt (1920[1978]:290). However, in a class society, no such peace is possible and the "mythical" cycle of state violence that both creates and preserves the law must be broken by "divine" revolutionary violence, which Benjamin see as a strange species of non-violence called "pure means", perhaps in order to justify it within his unique pacifist framework (281). He lauds Sorel's call for the general strike and deeply sympathizes with his "syndicalist" rejections of the State as a rejection of "ends", that is, a rejection of the usurpation of State violence (291). Benjanin, however, was cautious about Bataille's "Joy in the Face of Death", to borrow the title of Bataille's own lecture (in Bataille 1988), and the warnings of his fellow colleague-in-exile of Bataille’s College of Sociology, Hans Mayer, can fairly be employed as the unwritten proscriptive conclusion that Benjamin’s meditations of violence, written almost two decades earlier, necessarily lacked. After a detailed but efficient geneological history of the transformation of the murderous German nationalists of 1819 into League of Nations devotees a century later, Mayer warns that the Third Reich shares a commitment with these violent ancestors to “the spirit of rebels, myth, and direct action” (Mayer 1939 in Bataille 1988:278), a phrase which should spark immediate concern for any anarchist. Michael Weingrad, a contemporary historian writing on the college as well as the special relationship between Benjamin and Bataille, considers this to have been intended as a warning to Bataille himself (2001:155). Mayer gave voice to the outlying contributors to the sacred college who could not dismiss Bataille’s argument for the necessity or inevitability of violence, but neither could they revel in it as he seemed so willing to do. Bataille's sacred sociology flirted freely with the profanity of fascism and he was warned by the school’s critics about the proximity of its anarchic aggression to fascism’s populist brutality, yet in its own time Bataille was never accused of crossing over.

So, let us finally drive the blade into the heart of the matter and let the act of consecration and condemnation apply equally for our sociologist of sacrifice as for we embattled anarchists, the mythologized rebels of direct action that we were. The terms of this judgment, I believe, can only be set in the terms established by Bataille himself, but I will go even further and afterward make an expert witness of Renee Girard, one of his most celebrated readers. Georges Bataille walked a very long road from seminary school to the *Acéphale* secret society, exhorting regressive pleasure and sacrificial violence, in a very short time largely due to his indictment of Christianity. Bataille found redemption, not for himself but for the very concept of democracy, in the elimination of State power through an elevation of the tragic (1988). Christianity, for him, was complicit in the logic of law and recapitulation, or perhaps *recapitation*, of power in its ability to “bring sacred things into play” through its identification with Christ “the victim” (135). He sees in the crucifix, as much as in the Italian *fasce* and the German swastika, an institutionalized meeting point for those wishing to eliminate, once and for all, criminality and social degradation from their polities. Bataille, in contradistinction to the fascists, demands that we associate not with the “slain king”, but with the criminal who kills him (Ibid.). In this spirit and after three years with the anarchists of Inex, I can report that our sympathies in the squat have always been with the criminal disturber of *Pax Artes* and not with the kings we crucified in public trials; though the sympathetic cultists of Gricko and Dejan remained among us in marginal silence, we disturbers of the peace continued our work of consecration-through-disruption in the full light of day. We were the criminals in the tragic fates of aforementioned "Bikini girls" party and the art installation in the lounge. Thus, at least by his own rubric, neither Bataille nor the anarchists can be properly associated with the eternal *fasce*, but neither are they compatible with peace of the polyvocal and peaceful liberalism embodied by the ‘apoliticians’ of the squat. This can only be confirmed by the biographical pathways through which numerous infoshop members and allies found their way into this controversial affinity group. At a couple in our ranks, indeed among most committed antifascists in the group, are known to have evolved into anarchism by renouncing their own nationalist sympathies of the past. Their love of “rebels and direct action” remained undiluted, but their place in the great mythical schema was radically transformed. To understand their transformation, as well as the reality of the distance between the anarchists and the politics they accused their fellow ‘squatmates’ of promoting, we must delve further into Bataille’s understanding of violence and interrogate his prodigal intellectual son, Renee Girard.

I take to heart Zeynep Direk’s (2004) distinction between the approach to sacrifice and sacred violence of Bataille and Renee Girard, though I will extend it more explicitly into the political field. Dirak proposes that the key to understanding Bataille’s intellectual and moral positionality on violence lies in his distinction between *transcendent* violence, that of power which distinguishes man’s violence from that of the beasts, and *immanent* violence which is the self-denying heart of social intimacy and the primal motor through which we desire each other, desire experience, desire the expenditure of energy, and meet the world as an immanent element of it and not above or beyond it. Bataille does not entirely dismiss of transcendent violence in the process of becoming human reflexive subjects and centralizes cruelty and consumption of animals or other people as basic to this process, but urges that we hold the power implied in such violence in contemptuous suspicion. Power is a false claim, a homogenizing militarism that redirects the “total social movement” of the king-slaying criminal masses into an institutional concatenation embodied by a single representative (Callouis and Bataille 1938 in Bataille 1988:133); it comes only from the transcendent sacrifice which propels Man out of His condition of immanence (Direk 2004). Immanent violence, which does not imply some devolutionary primordial regressive impulse but in fact begs a conscious instrumentalization, is that which returns the transcendent subject to a state of immanence. For this reason, Bataille, counter-intuitively as it were, identifies the profane as the world built upon transcendent violence and the sacred in immanence. Girard, agreeing with Bataille that the sacrifice offers a path away from the primal violence which, in his distinctly Hobbesian sensibility identifies as “mimetic”, yet desires an ultimate escape from the immanent and the cycle of sacrifice that, as a rule, can only be accomplished by the murder of the innocent and the subsequent denial of that innocence by the offending society (1989:278). The sacrifice of Jesus, he claims, released mankind of these bonds of mimetic violence, Bataille’s “immanent violence”, by accepting the innocence of Christ and condemning the sacrificial act *tout court* (2015:168). Henceforth, the sacrifice would be increasingly seen as as barbarism, while science, Girard claims, could finally develop as a transcendent solution to the problem of mimetic violence (178). Girard’s crucifixion, the sacrifice that wasn’t, essentially transcends what Bataille identifies as the transcendent. Clearly, Girard’s social-control approach to sacrifice was inspired by, if not entirely ripped-off from, Bataille, but whereas Girard sought an end to the criminal community of sacrifice through a final transcendent act, Bataille rejected the idea of an eternal transendence, exposing it as the naked usurpation of social forces on the part of the powerful and sought a conscious embrace of immanency and the criminal who, in its name, commits herself to regicide. Girad’s sacrifice offers us the transhumanist apocalypse of his disciple Peter Thiel and his AI-obsessed Silicon Valley cults investing their capital and corpses into cryogenic firms in the hope of immortality[11]. In absolute contrast, Bataille’s sacrifice is the anthropological basis of the non-functional reproductive establishment of sacred spaces of possibility: spaces like those which the Belgrade anarchists carved out of the pretense to peace and the claims of the 'Artist Collective' and the mediator strata to a transcendence from the political.

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[11] Peter Thiel explains how an esoteric philosophy book shaped his worldview. *Business Insider.* Nov. 2014.

Immanent violence, for the anarchist, does not end in the slaughter of criminality nor the restoration of mythological hierarchies, with death comes resolution and Benjamin's cyclical violence of the State. Even as a comrade of mine takes up arms in the International Revolutionary People's Guerrilla Forces in Syria against the Islamic State, he does not envision mass executions and work camps, but skirmishes and liberations creating a relative regional hegemony of the fragile ideal of communism. Like anarchist economies, anarchist consensus, anarchist music, anarchist art, anarchist victory is not found in finality but in the infiinite reproduction of struggle towards Utopia: Utopia, the unreachable Other World of Experience Reversed. Class struggle does not end with the abolition of capitalism, but only after the abolition of patriarchy, race, property, centralized power, militarism, patriotism, borders, *et cetera*. When I undertook the anarchist struggle in Inex as my own, it was not a struggle that I, or any of us, expected to finish, but a struggle we were devoted to keeping alive. The fascist threat of groups like *Srbska Akcija* outside the walls of the squat as well as that of the 'liberal' users inside of it both sought peace, the former through militarism and brutality that obscures a coldly rational and calculated base, and the latter through negotiation and communicative rationality that hides a dread-inducing carceral terror at its ideological heart. From a historical perspective, these ideological forces speak in "solutions", "advances", "progressions", and the inevitability of historical becoming. The anarchists of Inex speak in "practices", "reflections", "possibilities", and "desire". The liberal and the fascist envision a world in which everyone agrees, though tolerance in the former and devotion in the latter; we Inex anarchists envisioned a world where agreement between all was unnecessary because its precondition, exploitative hierarchy, had been eviscerated from the social body and networked multiplicity has replaced the uniformity of scale. Neither peace nor violence are fetishized in this world despite the obvious desireability of the former, but are seen as immanent to the social itself.

"Maybe don't dress in black so much..."

There was no other reason than this ideological incompatibility for the active destruction of friendly relations in Inex on the part of the anarchists. While such incompatibilities unquestionably produced antipathies between users in the squat, even these antipathies would often be expressed by the anarchists in political terms whereas at other times political gripes would be expressed in personally insulting terms. While political motives for antipathetic behavior were suspected by the cultural users, my informants expressed a sense of bewilderment at it and remained unsure as to how they had inspired such ire, and they lay the blame for it at the feet of 'group mentality'. Stojke, a self-identified artist in the squat explains:

> Sometimes there was this attitude. Like, I think everybody [from the cultural side of Inex] can say these things. Like, if there was something they didn't like or was opposed to [the anarchists] stopped saying hello to you. They had a [private] meeting when they talked about problems they had with somebody and suddenly they are not saying hello to you, and some days I come and people from the infoshop are hugging me but then they are not saying hello. Many people told me this. I didn't understand, why this group mentality?

Stojke further suggested that the anarchists might have tried dressing in black less or assigning tasks to the cultural users of the squat in order to create more harmony. Of course, the anarchist were not interested in harmony for its own sake but in creating a politically-founded ethical field made from politically engaged actors. Often, when we would complain about the ethics of our squatmates, we would abandon political terms altogether and refer to our opponents simply as “idiots” or the like. Stupidity, in our estimation, was a political liability in the same way as neutrality and compromise; it was a sure path to the profane. Stupidity and innocence broadly share a base of inactivity and unintentionality, values embodied entirely by the apolitical Inex user. The anarchist sacrificing of these innocents, however, was no act of scapegoating; the result was not peace nor did it sublimate and externalize the crimes of the offending community. A Girardian approach must be silent on this matter. Bataille’s call for a sacrifice founded in the immanency of violence and the adoption of the “tragic” criminality of agents, however, accounts for this phenomenon *in toto*. The anarchists could only be criminals in the squat as their victims were, right up to the formation of the 'Artist Collective', seen emically as fools, though the anarchists were also sacrificial agents who cut at this foolishness in effort to establish the sacred politic.

The cohesiveness of the anarchists, at least in the eyes of the cultural Other, proved threatening to many in the squat, as Stojke indicated above. Others, including members of the kindergarten collective, derided the anarchists for appearing like “soldiers” who “think with one mind”, arriving at assembly meetings of disorganized apolitical individuals with conspiratorial forethought and clarity of purpose. For our part, such assertions rang both humorous and hollow given the complex interplay of internal ruptures, debates, and discontent that haunted the ‘anti-authoritarian’ affinity groups of Inex. Nonetheless, this image had a corralling effect on many in the squat, as evident in the formation of the 'Artist Collective', which was almost immediately de-legitimized as contrary to the spiritual value of Inex. The anarchists, targeted directly by their machinations, and having been met, finally, in an exclusively political field that they themselves created through sacrificial acts of symbolic and real violence, easily disarmed and marginalized the reactionary group. Within weeks, the organizers of the collective had fled organizational structure the squat entirely, leaving the assembly meetings squarely in the hands of the anarchists and the mediating strata before deciding that they were altogether pointless and launching a new ‘anti-authoritarian Inex’ assembly a short time after, inaugurating a new but brief era in the power structure of the squat.

[I/C] Structural power

Relations of property and communication structures in the squat

InexFilm and the Anthropology of/against Power

While a constructive approach to the sacrificial process of identification and squatting, with the vital dynamic addition of emancipatory politics, explains the meaning and cosmological place of Inex in This World, as well as the place of the anarchist tendency within it, only an anthropological approach to power can elucidate its internal dynamics. Throughout this dissertation, the issue of power is consistently tied to that of class struggle, however class might express itself in a given field. InexFilm, however, sometimes breaks this focus. As a heterotopic emancipatory microcosm dedicated to limiting or even eliminating both hierarchy and exploitation inside its walls, Inex did not suffer an *internal* class dynamic endemic to its own mode of reproduction; this was, after all, a more-or-less communistic experiment. However, the unresolved class struggles that shape daily life in Belgrade did manifest within the squat in the forms of struggles over identity, challenges to group loyalty, and trash talk. The racism, patriarchy, and recourse to legalism mentioned above were all acts based on normative dispossession and the threat of class violence; though these must be viewed emically as profane pollution in an otherwise sacred space. Moreover, InexFilm was a field formed at the ‘critical junction’ of structures of global capitalism and local action. Class struggle, of course, was inscribed in the very condition of the place as a piece of neoliberal Belgrade, and the destructive potential of the property-holding bourgeois owner was forever a looming storm on the horizon, though only during the final days did the scale of this conflict of interest and position manifest itself within the actual space.

Within the field of Inex, gaming was the order of the day. Inside that game, individual actors impressed, aided, and restricted each other by accessing power either from external fields, from the wealth of meaning inherent in their cultural milieu, and grouping together into tactical coalitions. Against this, each individual user was of course tasked with her own unique designs and desires and afforded some level of agency in order to realize them. This quadripartite approach to the exercise of power is the legacy of Eric Wolf and his now-canonical lecture “Facing Power—Old Insights, New Questions” (1990). Wolf's formulation reads as follows: personal capability, the first form of power, is the willful potential with which any given individual meets the world. The second form accounts for the ability of that individual to exert his will onto another and expect it to be realized; we might call this form 'interpersonal power'. He calls the third form “tactical power” and describes it as the power to “direct energy flows” in a given structured setting; this power is associated with instrumentalizing the condition in which one finds oneself and organizing it in a beneficial way (586). The final form of power he identifies as “structural power”; this is the power to shape the limits of the possible, to demarcate the field in which all social action takes place and to define the categories from which that action draws meaning (587). This is the structure *against* agency.

While it is not my intention to merely ‘prove’ Wolf’s approach by overlaying InexFilm onto his roadmap, his approach provides a stable launching pad for an ethnography based on struggle as well as an appreciation of the potential for such struggles both to create emancipatory ‘exilic’ spaces as well as provide the scaffolding for the construction of durable sodalities therein. At Inex, the last two forms of power are largely mixed together in the struggle over space. Space is basis of all power at InexFilm and the tactical gaming of it amounts to a pitched struggle for political hegemony inside the squat. This struggle does not exist in isolation; one's effectiveness in this field is largely determinable by their relationship to and, place within, macrostructural conditions outside of the Inex heterotopia. Therefore, in order to examine how power works in the squat, we must attend just as closely to the political economic conditions of the squat itself as well as those within it.

Structural Power: The Political-Economy of InexFilm

As both heterotopic and exilic, InexFilm was neither entirely autonomous from a political-economic standpoint nor yet entirely dependent on the macrostructural forces of capitalism. From the point of view of its operators, InexFilm's place in the world system had always been, of course, subject to powers well beyond their capacity to manage or oppose. In fact, some participants in InexFilm before the exodus of the cultural-users were perfectly happy to hook the internal processes of Inex onto the churning gears of Capital and determine the squat's place in its machinery. The majority that rejected capitalism’s interference in the squat, however they may have interpreted it, nonetheless found themselves encompassed in novel internal structural forces of Inex which manifested themselves in struggles over value, space, and ideology. Due to a structural commitment to consensus decision making in the all-squat general meetings discussed in later sections, the anarchists and the sympathetic mediator strata can be said to have successfully altered the hegemonic structure of debates over gender, race, and marketization within the squat to the detriment of prevailing discourses outside of it. In other structural fields, however, they had significantly less success. Games of space, consent, and sentiment will be addressed in the next section on tactical power; I would like here to focus on a key structural axis upon which those games turned: property. As the star critical junction of class relations in capitalism, it should come as no surprise that conflicting considerations and valuations of property provided the motor for both identity and struggle within the squat as well as with the squat's place in the outside world. The bulk of conflicts which can be said to have taken on a more traditional class dynamic turned on this issue.

Inex *as* Property

As I mentioned earlier, Inex was initially squatted under the impression that it was still property of the State. In fact it was sold off in 2004 after the accelerated privatization schemes of the assassinated prime minister Zoran Đinđić's had matured[12]. InexFilm was a social industry that had gone bankrupt, in due to the intentional bankrupting on the part of the State of domestic development banks in the first year of the 2000's (Grubačić 2010). These banks had kept many struggling socially owned firms alive during the long crisis of the 90s, much to the frustration of the government's rabid privatizers (Arandarenko 2001). Within two years of their closure fully half of Serbia's remaining social enterprises were sold off to foreign investors with the help of the IMF and the World Bank (Hadzic 2002). The property upon which the bankrupt InexFilm building moldered, however, went to a local developer and owner of the Jasmin perfume firm whose plans were apparently paralyzed by zoning strictures in Karaburma. The property remained stripped and purposeless before being re-tasked by activists in 2011.

Belgrade has become a greenfield for wild capital investments. Socialist *nomenklatura*, normalized criminals, and foreign development firms have all benefited at the great expense of the extant population (Lazic 1997:96). The only notable successes of this process have been the sudden rise in shopping malls in the city; on almost every other front, the promises of urban renewal and employment have been left broken. New bridge projects have built by Chinese firms with imported Chinese labor and the railway was sold off to a criminal promising renovation yet delivering only lengthening travel times on decaying tracks. Most recent among these is the surreal and plainly absurd “Belgrade Waterfront” project by Dubai-based developer Eagle Hills. The firm managed to secure, through methods unknown but relatively easy to guess, a century-long lease on an entire neighborhood in the center of the city on which it has already begun construction at the time of this writing. They plan to completely reconstruct the area in Dubai's sparkling image including a glass skyscraper and numerous luxury hotels and offices. InexFilm itself will soon be neighbors to yet another massive shopping center by the Plaza Centers construction firm who, unlike Eagle Hills, does have a reputation for completing their projects.

Due to the combination of wartime sanctions and a generalized popular suspicion towards the penetration of neoliberalism into a highly politicized ‘socialist’ economy, the privatization process in Serbia made very little headway until the late 90s. Now in 2015, the fates appear to have finally succeeded in snipping the lifeline of Edvard Kardelj's dream of a self-managed worker state. Any fuzziness remaining in the moral weight of post-socialist property is now clarifying itself in the starkest of terms. Following the return of Inex to the profane ocean of private property, the anarchists attempted to squat a disused cinema in the center of town in the summer of 2016. Despite having the blessings of several active remaining worker-shareholders of the Belgrade Film company who were still contesting the space's privatization, the squat was sold with the judge's blessings

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[12] Privatization Agency of the Republic of Serbia. Decision on Restructuring. March 3rd, 2008. http://www.priv.rs/Agencija+za+privatizaciju/5496/Odluka+o+restrukturiranju.shtml

from the contested hold of a convicted criminal into the hands of a developer. The anarchists were removed after only a few short and labor intensive months. Another episode of this 'de-fuzzification' of Yugoslav property will be described in chapter three via the tragic fate of the 'No Border Hostel' in the face of foreign development interests. Though efforts to establish new squats continue, it is entirely possible that InexFilm might have represented the tail-end of the post-socialist property regime in Belgrade.

As users of a squatted space that made social value from its constant denial of the market value of its property, one might have expected the Inex general assembly to have been a space where the users realized themselves as a class whose interests were dynamically opposed to those of the property owner; this never occurred. With the owner's gaze once again set on Inex, the class position of the users was obscured, in some cases, through a re-writing of Inex's origins, as alluded to above. Instead of being a place of social value stolen from the market by radicals, it became, in story, the pet project of a benevolent patron of the arts, the owner, to whom all owe their deference. Even those who had come with the original squatters exhibited an aggressive disinterest in the prospects of a resistance. For our part, despite our decorous talk against capitalism and brave proclamations, the anarchists accepted a quiet defeat when the owner finally did take an interest in the space. It was, in fact, only in that defeat that the event was realized as a class struggle at all. What lessons might this offer for the macrocosm of Belgrade itself? If presented with a choice between defeat and alliance, perhaps it is too much to expect an honest capitulation of the defeat of the toiling majority at the hands of the parasitic ruling strata. As we will see in the following sections, the so-called 'artists' and 'hippies' mythologized and aligned themselves with their class opposite, reifying their own sodality in the process, they took on the task of class struggle on 'His' behalf. When the 'anarchists' entered into direct conflict with this quisling minority, they undertook this struggle as one between classes, even if it adopted almost every fRomal expression possible apart from "class" itself. If Inex was internally a quasi-communist political economic microcosm which lacked class struggle from within, the defense of this communism against its infection from without was unquestionably a class struggle. As this text continues, I beg the reader to hold firm this structural foundation in their minds and relay what follows back to its ever-present force of being.

Inex *of* Property

Beyond its own fuzzy status *as* property in a state of unresolved class struggle, Inex is itself was full *of* property suffering a similar state fuzziness. As a squat, what constituted 'yours', 'mine', or 'ours' was always a matter of debate and confusion. Rooms were claimed, more often than not, simply by the act of claiming and a lack of objection backed by enough force to undo it. Tools, technically, had individual owners, though more often than not only a handful of people knew who these owners actually were. Past participants in the squat left infrastructural improvements that were assumed to belong to the squat itself, though when Inex eventually was returned to the owner in October of 2015, these old ghosts returned to take back what they felt was rightfully theirs. People came back for "their" door frames, flooring, water-heaters, stoves, etc., despite the stated intention of the remaining squatters to use these things for a followup project. Property was also assigned owners based on ideological divisions. Users like Dejan and Đura, key opposition figures who will return again and again in my narrative as antagonists, allegedly engaged in acts of covert thefts against the anarchists, supposedly in support of their own new squat – a short lived cultural space – whereas the anarchists made every effort to secure important materials as “theirs” even if this meant resorting to individuals claiming things as personal property.

The ideological divides had political economic consequences as well as being consequences of the political economy themselves. Đura, for instance, was using a room in the squat as a source of private profit to grow edible mushrooms which he sell as “forest gathered”. He was not the first privatizer in the squat; prior to my arrival, a woman had been using Inex for private art classes and even, at times, complained about the wildness of the place at the collective meetings because she was afraid it might discourage paying students from coming. There was something of a microcosm here of the broader struggle over property in post-socialist Serbia. Here was a building abandoned by the State in which pitched struggles were being waged over whether the property should be communal and autonomous, as argued by the anarchists and their allies, private, as argued by the liberal individualists, or an organized meritocratic non-profit space as argued by the bulk of the “cultural-users” and their allies, some of whom qualified legally as NGOs.

Totally Metal: The 'artists' versus the 'gypsies' and 'anarchists'

Beyond the rooms and tools, the most interesting item of conflict at Inex was metal. In these struggles, an entire map of class relations and identity over space and time unfurls. The deep meaning of metal arises primarily from the identities of the actors involved, namely the most active of the cultural-users and the regular visitors from the nearby Roma settlement, *Deponija*. Conflicts over metal between the artists and the recyclable-collecting 'gypsies' of *Deponija* are as old as the kindergarten itself. It is not hard to understand why. Upon arriving at InexFilm, the first thing collectors see are the hillocks of slowly rusting metal scattered around the yard and in messy little clusters throughout the building. Metal is by far the most profitable recyclable and here it is, unprotected hence unclaimed, in arms reach. The second thing the collectors see is an angry white face shooing them away and accusing them of theft. That angry white face, the collector learns later, is an “artist”. As I sit here, typing this paper, trying to imagine the viewpoint of an urban collector, I am tempted to define an “artist” as a person who uses valuable resources in such a way that they simultaneously take-up common spaces for personal gratification while rendering the resources themselves worthless. The artist, economically speaking, I must imagine as seeing the gypsy collector either as a relentless thief with a hand always in the artist's pocket of his hard-earned resources or as a force of nature, like rust itself, which must be protected against lest it ruin his stockpiles. This would explain why, by and large, the artists at Inex never learned a single name of any of *Deponija*'s residents, despite their daily presence in the squat, while simultaneously blaming Koko Lepo for any conflicts they had with them, much as you might blame a child for leaving the door open and letting bugs into the house. Even one relatively friendly artist who, in interview, said that anything left in the yard should not be cried over when it is taken, nonetheless saw an inevitability in ‘gypsy’ practices explained through a rough sort of cultural relativism; “I don’t think we can judge their society!” The ‘gypsy’ has always been a discrete and foreign interloper for most of Inex’s users: sometimes good, sometimes bad, but always outside.

The collection and recycling of metal is maintained by the global political economy and it is no less the globally negotiated exports and imports of raw materials, sometimes thousands of miles away, than local Serbian prejudices which has racialized the Gypsy collector in Belgrade. In chapter two, I will explain in greater detail the process by which collection is, in fact, racialized and how that racialization is due to the inevitable dynamics of global capitalism, in particular its need for a diverse toolkit for social control. Sufficed to say, the premium on reclaimed metal in Belgrade is reflective of this process and there can be no greater gulf in the perception of metal's value than that between the Roma collector and the 'white' artist; one might as well be making sculptures out of dinar.

Which brings us to the infamous aluminum can incident…

In May, 2015, during a relatively successful day for Koko Lepo in the squat's anarchist infoshop, Đura burst into the room and in full view of the kids proceeded to threaten and menace one of the adult collective members with his customary trollishness. As this member was me, I took it as a personal offense. The issue was with some aluminum cans that had been collected at a party the night before. We were accustomed to giving these cans to some of the older kids in the settlement and they were accustomed to receiving them. Now, to be fair, I did have some suspicion that the cans were spoken for by at least one member of the “cultural organizers” but I could not find anyone from their ranks to attest to this; so, when the kids asked for the cans, I, unflinching, said “Sure!”.

The kids themselves were two very amiable and supportive boys from the slum with whom we've had nothing but positive experiences. They had decided that the ‘*Skolica*’ youth program was not for them but came by now and then to chat and, if they were available, walk home with a few cans for their own start-up collection business. InexFilm had always been a good source of aluminum because of the ungodly amount of drinking we did there. By this time, tensions had cooled somewhat in settlement/Inex relations and metal that the artists had earmarked for their own projects found a special place in the yard separate from that which could be freely collected for recycling. This system was far from perfect and violations, both intentional and accidental, did occasionally occur, though with increasing infrequency. This was due to the fact that more people, not to mention friendlier people, had taken up residence in the squat and were around to monitor the grounds. Nonetheless, aluminum cans had traditionally been an unchallenged field of property relations between Inex and *Deponija*; the cans were ‘commons’.

As it turned out, the some of the artists had, in fact, intended these cans for artistic purposes and upon discovering their “theft”, went into a state of panic. They were working on a rather uninspired “grotto” for the common space in the backyard and using these cans –which had to, of course, be in a perfect state with no bends or wrinkles –from which to carve fish that were then painted blue. These were to be hung from a “tree” – in fact a set of unstained professionally asssembled heavy wooden beams placed conspicuously in front of the external entrance to the infoshop – under which Inex’s cultural strata was destined to contemplate its obsessive self-love in exhibitionist repose. For this effort, they declared a moratorium, Inex-wide, on the crushing and donating of used cans. As the cold-war of Inex had cooled once again to the point of diplomacy, there was no resistance to this decree. The “theft” was a complicated new element in these relations, and I was pressured by a member of Koko Lepo who still had relations with 'the artists' to try and make amends. I told her that I wanted no part in anything that might actively aid the efforts of the informal liberal-right political apparatus of the squat embodied by Đura’s circle, but I was sorry that some apparently decent people within the gaggle of artists had also been inconvenienced by this development.

After speaking at some length with the lead designer of this fish tree, a woman who had recently arrived in Inex and seemed to be a surprisingly reasonable and thoughtful person considering the company she kept, I committed some minimal effort towards correcting the slight. I even lied and told her that I would ask if they could return the cans, a request I found completely absurd though wasn't interested in arguing about, so I contacted the boys to tell them that cans were off-limits for a little while. This effectively strangled the metal supply from Inex completely as most of the yard had been claimed or picked clean. I was still not entirely satisfied though, and to be honest, the very fact that a well-educated white artist would have any opinion about our young friends taking aluminum for the purposes of self-reproduction still rubbed me the wrong way. So, by way of offering some perspective, I asked her to at least remember that the cans were not wasted, but were put to a family's livelihood and probably became food. Along with a promise to preserve future cans and despite a few more inevitable confrontations with Đura, I assumed that was the end of it.

To my surprise, the artist had a bit of an inspiration. Instead of allowing cans to simply become a controlled substance and a point of conflict between the property claims of the artists and the reproductive needs of the collectors –can we imagine a more clearly drawn class relationship? –she would instead pay our friends for their cans. She looked-up the going rate and at first offered to match it, naively thinking that in-tact cans would be worth the same as crushed ones. I sent her proposal to the boys who rejected it outright, expressing that it is hard enough to find sufficient cans in any condition to add up to to even five euro. I asked if four times the going rate would suffice and they agreed that it just might. She grudgingly acceded to these terms and I put them in touch with each other over Facebook. While the artist elevated herself from mere property owner to petty bourgeoisie and through this remaking of her class position, she also laid the groundwork for new articulations of settlement/squat relations, though this arrangement never materialized in any meaningful way. It did mark, however, the first time any member of the 'artists' engaged in direct, non-confrontational communication with members of the settlement on a one-on-one basis. Metal brought them together just as it divided them, a class relationship *par excellence*, and this unity was entirely based on the juggling of property, dues, and ownership. Of course, this new relationship proved, in the end, entirely ephemeral, however it does illustrate how these relationships are in fact a simmering soup of class dynamics always a few degrees away from boiling over. Koko Lepo, likewise, found itself constantly on guard lest similar dynamics arose from their own initiatives.

The cans were originally common resources that were collectively earmarked for the neighboring collectors though without any official status. These cans, through semi-formal initiatives, were then claimed as the property of the artists hence the collectors lost their rights to access this common resource. When these resources were re-appropriated by those who need them for self-reproduction, the 'official' claimants of the property redefined their relationship to the collectors from opponents to employers, offering greater remuneration than they would otherwise have received, but for more particular work. Here we see a combination of preexisting class relationships, exhibited primarily through race and culture, remake themselves through property into new forms. This new form was not more egalitarian, but did respond to several contradictions in the previous dynamic. Had this progressed, new contradictions and claims could have arisen, remaking the class dynamic once more.

The Owner

The owner of InexFilm took center stage in its internal political turmoil in the first months of 2015 without ever actually being present. With the singular exception of the anarchist collective of Infoshop Furija, every affinity group within the squat had at least one member, often a majority of members, who supported working with the owner in the operation of the squat. The anarchists, by contrast, regarded the owner as a threat with no moral claim to the space. This issue came to the fore, and very nearly to blows, after it was revealed that an early but lately absent user of the space had struck a dangerous deal with the owner more than a year prior: the aforementioned 'petition' of Dejan's, introduced above. In what was thought to be a petition to pressure the anarchists of Inex to renounce “direct action” tactics in the squat, Dejan collected through a mixture of consent, threat, and forgery the names of many members of the space for the owner. The true purpose of the list was revealed, almost too late, by a politically schizophrenic member of Koko Lepo at an Inex assembly meeting. As I stated earlier, this opened up the question of outside interference in the internal politics of the squat as well as the question of whether or not the owner counted as an outsider or an insider.

Who was the owner to the 'artists’?

While his outsider status was confirmed in theory, delegates were nonetheless assigned to be liaisons between the owner and users of the squat. Dejan was effectively pushed out of the space through extreme marginalization and a critical mass of negative sentiment. The damage was done, however, and the owner suddenly acquired a renewed interest in the building. His son, a rather typical caricature of a young male who grew up with money in a poor city, and the Jasmin secretary demanded a room in the squat for storage. With little oversight and no consultation with the other collectives, the rarely-used room of the break dancing collective was offered up to them as well as a small section of the Inex theater. This was organized by the collaboration of ostensibly anarchist-allied members of theater group, the leadership of the cultural-users, and one of the more extreme liberals from the kindergarten.

In fact, sections of this dubious coalition even offered Koko Lepo's room up to the interlopers though they themselves rejected the offer on the rather ironic grounds that they didn't want to kick anyone out. The Koko Lepo collective itself was never consulted about this. For the 'cultural-users' of the squat, however, the owner's voice was that of God, consecrated, in the Bourdieuian sense, by no less than the law itself. A member of Koko Lepo who maintained consistently strong ties to the most inimical elements of the cultural regime pressed this view of the owner with particular fervor. “It's his space,” she argued, “He should have a say!” Arguments to the contrary were received with a typically liberal appeal to a plurality of voices and the need to weigh all sides of the debate.

Key among the arguments levied against the anarchist position can be described as a sort of micro-myth of Inex's origins which I have already alluded to above several times. This reads as follows: the owner, in his enlightened magnanimity and largess, selflessly sacrificed his rightful claim to these bare walls in the name of the Arts and culture. The myth continues that he himself is a great patron and admirer of the arts which run deep in his family; presumably his wife or his daughter fancies herself an artist in her own right. This myth enabled an ever present veneer of authority polished and spit-shined at each meeting and in each conflict by the 'cultural-users' of Inex. Even latecomers to the squat referred to this myth in their lingering threats against the infoshop and the kindergarten. As Đura once threatened me in an aggressive confrontation in the Inex kitchen, “Why don't we just call the owner and tell him what you've been up to?” This is the essence of collaboration and it is no coincidence that these collaborators were also those who rallied most heartily against the anti-sexist actions of the anarchists as well as against the regular stream of gypsy visitors to the squat. Whiteness and misogyny, in my reading, has always been primarily a matter of collaboration with the ideals of propertied rule (Allen 1994, Federici 2004, Ignatiev 1995, Linebaugh and Redikker 2013).

Who was the owner to the 'anarchists'?

The anarchist line, both within Koko Lepo and in the meetings where the infoshop was featured, was simple: this is not the owner's space, his legal claim does not constitute any special right nor demand any particular deference. Diplomatic relations with the owner could be considered only as a strategic matter with no innate moral relevance. The anarchists considered the owner an outside threat, a position they managed to win consensus over in the final assembly meetings of the squat. For those with even the most primitive knowledge of anarchism, this position should come as no surprise. Furthermore, the anarchists largely categorized the users of Inex based on their position on the owner as an insider or outsider. This was so definitive that even those users of Inex who occupied the mediator strata of the squat, refusing to commit to either camp and emphasizing in all instances the neutrality of assembly procedure, were also commonly viewed as collaborators no better than the most aggressive of the “fucking artists”.

What is most interesting about the anarchists is not their position on the owner, which is anything but extraordinary considering their ideological background, but rather the inconsistent and tense period of communication between them and the ownership strata after the ‘cultural’ users fled the building. Following a confusing period of rumors and miscommunications between the owner and the cultural leadership, as well as between the cultural-users themselves, the vast majority of the collaborative cultural users abandoned the squat while under the impression that the owner himself commanded it. The anarchists launched their own investigation into the matter and could produce no hard evidence that the owner had made any particular threats and so incorrectly dismissed these claims as lunacy typical of the cultural section of the squat. The anarchists continued to occupy the building, now in total control of its concrete halls, until months later the owner finally did manifest himself. He met a building in the midst of a massive renovation; confused and angry, he demanded to know why the squatters hadn't left yet. Now that several of us were living there, all of whom members of the same affinity groups, communication on the issue was noticeably accelerated and debates about what to do flourished.

New liaisons were assigned to communicate with the owner. In a controversial move, both were chosen on the basis of gender. It was theorized that women would play on his patriarchal instincts and encourage more patience on his part as opposed to possibly confrontational aggression catalyzed by a sense of inter-male competition. These liaisons, both members of Infoshop Furija, kept in semi-regular phone contact with the owner which eventually culminated in a meeting with him and the social users of Inex, now almost its sole occupiers. This meeting was attended by anti-authoritarian members of Koko Lepo, as well as the anarchists and even a member of the group which originally squatted the building years ago. It was here that they were presented with the carrot and the stick. Stay, fight, and lose, or walk away now at your own pace and use the building as your personal storage until it is finally torn down. The anarchists knew a good deal when they heard one and grabbed onto the carrot after the shortest of debates. This is how the squat ended, not with a bang, but with a whimper.

Bills: the material basis of InexFilm's continued internecine communication

The Inex-wide assembly meetings largely ceased following a failed attempt to evict the anarchist elements from the squat. Nonetheless, even warring tribes in the squat had to maintain a minimum of communication for the sake of paying the bills. In the first year of its opening, InexFilm arranged a deal with a neighbor to use his electricity and compensate him for the cost. This neighbor, a man whom very few in Inex knew the name of, suffered overloaded circuit breakers and risked the gaze of annoyed city meter readers presumably because he thought whatever we were doing with the space was better than what the ‘junkies’ used to do there. Beyond the occasional shared infrastructural costs, of which there were few to none apart from a brief but intense period of sewage renovation, electricity was the only common cost shared by all at the squat.

As a material sum subject to division between participants, the bill proved simultaneously a source of conflict and unification. This would appear to confirm and invert Max Gluckman's potent assertion that conflict is what keeps structures together; at Inex, structural power also reproduced conflict. In order to figure out how to divide the obligation between users of the space, it had to be decided whether spaces/groups of users would engender one share or if each individual would. As the anarchists and their allies naturally coalesced in collectives, or failing that were pushed into collective identities, the artists, who worked mostly alone or in pairs, found the former option to be against their interests. This brought some not-so-guilty pleasure to many of the anarchists who had long considered the egoistic usage of space on the part of the “fucking artists” as a value-less waste, and felt vindicated by the electric bill, as an equivalent value form, suggesting more or less the same. The collectives were none the less counted and, sure enough, the focus on groups proved insufficient as collectivity among the various 'anarchist' activities and collectivity between the individualist artists were conceptually incommensurate.

Therefore, the first-ever general census of the InexFilm squat was attempted right there in the meeting. The participants in the meeting, numbering maybe fifteen all-in-all, assembled a list of over fifty regular users of the space. A number which obviously surprised everyone as, on a given day, one might only see five to ten people working in the space. Of course, the discussion centered largely on who could and who could not be considered obligated to contribute to the electric bill, though no serious debates ensued in this deliberation. With no mechanism, or desire, to officiate the collection of dues, a box was passed around the meeting and all were urged to take responsibility for others in their collectives or rooms to contribute to these costs. The individual contribution was set at 200 to 500 RSD a month per person depending on their ability to pay.

The collection of money for the electric bill remained, from that point, an integral part of the Inex general meeting, obligating even irregular participants to show up more frequently. It proved to be a golden era, lasting, perhaps, a full year, of the general meeting as a communication structure, though the deep ideological differences that these meetings laid bare proved, eventually, to be its own undoing. After the collapse of the general meetings and its division into dueling interest blocks, the warring parties would find themselves still connected by their shared material obligation, though the task of collecting the money would be passed on to members with whom no one harbored any specific resentment. The golden era of communication, under the auspices of a shared material obligation and means of reproduction, reinforced the unbridgeable chasms between the ideological blocks of the squat and precipitated an acceleration and intensification of conflicts in the final year of InexFilm, yet another black mark for 'communicative rationality'.

[I/D] Tactical power

Space, exclusion, communication, graffiti, and items of value created order and conflict within the squat and without

Tactical Power

I have already provided some hints as to how the uses of the InexFilm squat have found themselves in relation to overarching structural frames that both constrain and empower them at various junctures. In this section, I wish to elaborate upon the employment of tactical power, in Wolf's formulation, to make the structured flows of power within the squat work for them or against others. This demands, at all times, a collective and holistic view of agency which I cover in greater detail in Part II of this dissertation. A holistic agency allows one to speak of collectivities of whatever scale as active intervening agents without fetishizing these relationships as discrete concretions existing, somehow, beyond their relational constitution. This section engages with such agency through a number of investigative questions that rose from my long fieldwork in the squat: How did groups manipulate spaces and the flows of activity through these them? How did the structure of consensus in a condition of normal heterotopic inequity produce relations counter to its original intention? How did collectivities arrange themselves around sentiment and indignation, and then use these to grab for power or amplify their collective voices? Each of these questions are subordinated to the ultimate problem of power within a heterotopic or exilic space of resistance and alterity. Visitors to Inex rarely had any inkling of the complex power struggles and long-game maneuvering that underwrote the seemingly peaceful social facade of the squat. By calling into question the effectiveness of anti-authoritarian staples such as consensus, more liberal tactics like civility and discourse, and claims to being a-political, I intend to support and reinforce Wolf's distinct faces of power by showing the limits of tactical power to seriously alter the structures in which they move. This should resonate particularly strongly with anarchists and those who remember the “shit shows” of the Occupy Wall St. movement: “fetishizing the organizational form”, to echo David Harvey and his spiritual predecessor, Leon Trotsky, is no substitute for structural change[13].

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[13] That said, I absolutely repudiate Harvey's general critique of anarchism on these terms, as I have written in detail in my article, *"I wouldn't want my anarchist friends to be in charge of a nuclear power station": David Harvey, anarchism, and tightly-coupled systems*, available at libcom.org

The Game of spaces

Hilda Kuper defines the 'site' as “a particular piece of social space … socially and ideologically demarcated and separated from other spaces” (2003:258). A site is therefore “a symbol within the total and complex system of communication in the total social universe,” through which “social relations are articulated” and which are granted importance by “their qualifying and latent meaning” (*Ibid*.). Kuper speaks of the “condensation of values” in particular sites and suggests that, collected and relative to others, they provide a concrete mapping where connected or shared values meet. As political spaces, sites embody a “network of communication” full of disputes and manipulation (259). The 'spatial-turn' in anthropology has long had a political basis, James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta explain that the move away from 'culture' as “naturally anchored in space” has demanded an anthropology that examines “the way spaces and places are made, imagined, contested, and enforced” (1992:18). True to this mission, Setha M. Low argues that spatially oriented ethnographies have access to “systems of exclusion that are hidden or naturalized and thus rendered invisible to other approaches”. Low identifies such spaces of exclusion with underlying structural forces of “racism, sexism, and classism that permeate neoliberal society” (2014:34). Spaces are prone to naturalization and consequently misrecognition. Uniting Low to Kuper, I disclose how spaces become sites in Inex through the process of “inscription”, the creation of “meaningful relationships” to their claimed sites (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2002:13). Having done so, I will conclude my ethnographic account of InexFilm by widening this focus by showing how space, as a tactical force, was used as an overt method of exclusion, not a merely hidden process. Space was constantly denied its capacity for naturalization by being challenged in general meetings and through symbolic violence.

Interestingly, the structural and systemic makeup of InexFilm enabled space itself to evolve some characteristics of an agent. In the general meetings of Inex, spaces were spoken for, they demanded certain activities and behaviors, and they could represent people in abstention. Space functioned in some cases as a Bourdieu-ian *skepsis*, the powerful token whose shared recognition enables the holder to speak legitimately, and in other cases as a constituency which needed to be spoken for. In the following examples, we will see how the tactical power associated with space at InexFilm has a multidimensional quality whose form and utility is constantly adjusted re-created as users navigate the power structures within the exilic heterotopia.

Exclusion and pushing out: the game is thievery

A prominent voice among the anarchists at Inex surprised me one day with his candor about the anarchists use of space in the squat. The Koko Lepo kindergarten was moving from the info shop into new quarters downstairs, displacing two artists who had previously used that space as their studios. The artists were built new studios next to the gallery as part of their agreement with the Koko Lepo collective. My anarchist friend, though poking fun at the endless complaints being issued from the migrating artists, said he was happy that the kindergarten had these rooms downstairs. I agreed, responding that it would make life much easier the general operations of the kindergarten and the infoshop, which no longer had to deal with the children wearing away at its infrastructure. My friend nodded in agreement, but elaborated, "but it's good that now we have more spaces than they do downstairs!" It was only at that point, that I realized the highly tactical nature of space claims in the squat.

If my anarchist comrade above had an arch-rival in the squat, it was Dejan. He was among the original squatters and typified, for the anarchists, the authoritarian arrogance of the cultural users of the assembly. Dejan had, with no consultation, combined two very large spaces in the squat that could have been used for any purpose into one enormous space for his ‘studio’, which in fact seemed more like a yugo-nostalgic museum of garbage assembled to impress party invitees. Given his unrelenting opposition to the continued presence of the anarchists, his space was seen by my comrades as enemy territory which had the capacity to expand and contract in tactical power as he brought allies in and out of the building. I began to see the limited space that InexFilm offered, large as the building might have been, as the dangerous game it truly was. To this end, the division and occupation of the InexFilm guest room on the part of my own arch-nemesis, Đura, could only be seen as a direct attack on the claiming of the space for social and communistic purposes. The cultural users, many of whom had no trouble using the space for private profits, maintained an aggressive and proactive relationship to spaces at Inex, inscribing them with invioliable tokens of ownership freely. While this met inevitable condemnation in the general meetings on the part of the anarchists, little direct action took place to resist them. This finally began to change, however, when a long time and active ally of Đura dramatically expanded his private quarters, also stolen, next to Koko Lepo's storage space, effectively shrinking it in the process.

Koko Lepo, as will be elaborated upon in the chapter about the free shop, always had a surplus of stuff. To contain it, they made use of the relatively spacious storage room next to the kitchen. As time passed, Koko Lepo's stuff began to dominate the space and it was thus inscribed as a site of their ongoing project. The space was officially inscribed as such in the general meetings and without controversy. When the space was deliberately shrunken to accommodate the expanding private room of one of the cultural users, this could meet no other interpretation rather than an act of aggression. Koko Lepo did, however, take direct action, stealing one of the unused private spaces of the cultural users for their new storage space as I recount in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, it had become clear to all that the inscribing of space was the key access upon which political power rests in the squat.

Space as *skepsis*: Dejan channels Martin Luther and the owner is almost offered a seat

As I slowly began to feel like a real member of the sociopolitical space in the squat, I arrived to Inex one day to find a long list of rules posted on the front door. The list was a mix of statements about authority as well as prescriptions and proclamations relating to user behavior within the halls: "those who have been at Inex longer have a more valuable voice at meetings!", "People must say hi to each other as they pass in the halls!", Etc.. The list had no author, though judging that somebody had already changed the title of the list from "new rules of Inex" to "Dejan's rules of Inex" indicated that the author was no secret. Dejan, as the list of rules implied, felt empowered by his long tenure as a space holder in Inex, and employed his spatial *skepsis* to channel Martin Luther and his immortal theses. In a general meeting that occurred before my tenure in the space began, Dejan himself challenged the anarchists of the squat, questioning their ability to participate as authoritative voices in meetings. Dejan asked what the anarchists, exactly, had been doing with their room and implied that it was being wasted. The anarchists replied, of course, with a list of all the activities they engaged in on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis before turning the question around. Dejan snorted with indignity and responded simply that his room was dedicated to "dialectics". Needless to say, this response became a running joke among the anarchists for years to follow.

Towards the end of InexFilm's life, the owner of the building started to develop a renewed interest in the space, and his extended family demanded, and was given by fiat, a large space in the squat to use as storage. This led to suggestions by “the fucking artists” and their scattered sympathizers in the squat to invite the representatives of the owner to the meetings as regular users of the squat. Despite the fact that the owner was determined to end the squat and reclaim full control over the space, his family's possession of a room therein created as an effective skepsis this in the minds of many. This idea was, of course, shot down instinctively by the anarchists on obvious grounds. But the simple fact that an interest so opposed to the squat itself was considered for participation in the general meeting indicates the power of space to produce voice and indicate legitimacy.

Representing space: the library versus the shoe shelf

In these latter days, I helped broker the purchase of flooring, doors, and heating infrastructure by us anarchists from a pair of long absentee artists using a space across the hallway from the lounge, where the general meetings were always held. I moved quickly on this, knowing that such a transaction allowed the anarchists to inscribe ourselves into the space by having relatively immobile property held within it, as well as a clear and stated intention for using the space. This was a highly tactical move designed to increase the anarchists influence in the squat as well as decrease the prospects for continued cultural incursions into the general spatial power structure. The cultural users also interpreted the move this way, and protests about the use of the space as a library by the anarchists abounded with many claims to its illegitimacy on the grounds that its purpose did not appeal to the artists and apoliticians, against whom the anarchists had maintained a long feud. So, the anarchists were again challenged to explain what the space was to do in order to justify their usage of it. Having already established the paradox of fighting a socially useful space while the cultural-users were holding private, enclosed spaces at the social's expense, the anarchists repeated their tactic and challenged one of their challengers to justify his own space. The anarchists had listed, once again, the bevy of open and public events hosted in their own space in the squat and asked how their accuser could claim better. The accuser, with a shocking lack of reflexivity, responded confidently that a couple months ago he had started construction on a shelf which visitors can place their shoes. Dripping with incredulity, his anarchist opponents summed up the conflict to all in attendance that their library project was being challenged by half-finished shoe shelf.

While the anecdote is amusing, it betrays a specific tactical dynamic and the use of spaces and inscription of sites. Users at the general meeting were commonly called to represent their spaces and argue for their legitimacy in the general scheme. The shoe shelf had to be advocated for in the same turn as it empowered its user to advocate. Thus, the spatial *skepsis* was always a fragile thing indeed, and engendered something of a gamble in its usage. It was placed front and center in political disputes at Inex and, though it empowered speech, it also invited critical deconstructions. Lacking any sustained formal method for distributing or denying spaces, the general meeting often devolved into a simple comparing of *skepses*, resulting in nothing concrete but nonetheless leaving some feeling justified and legitimate as active voices, and others disempowered or disenfranchised. The tactical usage of space exposed the ideological and structural bases of inequality that the superficial acceptance of consensus decision-making merely covered up.

The game of consensus: inequity as equals

Consensus decision making is such an integral part to contemporary anarchism that it is often mistaken for anarchism itself. It is a form of collective decision making where no single voice should enjoy superiority over another, and nothing can pass into action without the consent of all participants. “Consensus-based decision-making does not demand that any person accept others' power over her,” writes CrimethInc., “though it does require that everybody consider everyone's else's needs” (2008:84). InexFilm, despite constant complaints by the liberals and cultural-users, operated thusly thanks to the tireless efforts to defend the practice on the part of the anarchists. A tactic supposedly borrowed from the meetings of the Society of Friends, more commonly known as the Quakers, in the United States, the consensus process denies the potential of either majority or minority control and instead privileges the autonomy and equality of the group itself over its actions, or at least holds them as equal and incomensurable. David Graeber, in his highly personal text *Direct Action* (2007), describes an encounter with a Quaker woman where they compared anarchist and Quaker methods of consensus decision making. He discovers that the Quaker model makes the position of “facilitator” the sole recipient of input by the participants whereas in the anarchist model, facilitators are simply there to keep the meeting moving and ensure equity between participants. Asked why the Quaker meeting prevents cross-talk, the woman responded that such things are “secular”. Graeber reflected on this assertion:

> ...the Quaker notion of meetings as spiritual events – whether there was some significance to the fact that the "process" anarchists are so obsessed with is always, elsewhere, seen as partaking of the sacred. Creating accord is the creation of society. Society is god. Or, perhaps, god is our capacity to create society. Consensus is therefore a ritual of sacrifice, the sacrifice of egoism, where the act brings into being that very god. (129)

Graeber's study, however, centers almost exclusively on those who are actively engaged in anti-authoritarian politics. InexFilm offers an interesting counterpoint to Graeber's ethnography by showing how consensus operated and faltered when the technique was superimposed on wildly different ideological and structurally situated actors. This point is shared by anthropologist Mark Bray's excellent work on the Occupy Wall St. movement on issues Graeber, a central figure in that movement, remained largely silent. He cites that the use of consensus in Occupy with “anyone and everyone...right off the street” enabled “liberal libertarianism in a context fraught with white supremacy and 'left colorblindness'” (2013). He found that minority voices often came to such meetings and assemblies already at odds with the trajectory or values that the anarchists, who brought the consensus process to OWS itself, held so sacred. Moreover, widespread confusion over the nature of the meeting lead many such assemblies to be commonly referred to as “shit shows”:

> Many people didn’t seem to realize that when you vote ‘no’ to a proposal you are implicitly voting ‘yes’ to its inverse. So, for example, if someone proposes a new guideline for personal conduct in the group in response to some hateful behavior and it’s rejected (perhaps because those who it is aimed at vote it down), then implicitly people have voted in favor of retaining the status quo, at least for the time being. The distinction between ‘doing something’ and ‘not doing something’ is misleading because any outcome of a vote will mean that the group will ‘do something’ either actively or passively. Once you understand this, it becomes clear that in some groups 11% determine the outcome to the detriment of the other 89%. When you get to the point where the minority is obstructing the majority, you have strayed far away from the thoughtfulness and inclusivity of consensus, which is not intended for power struggles. (2012:88)

Despite the intention, consensus can become a purposeful tactical field for the enactment of power struggles. CrimethInc., largely through developing critiques with OWS, points to a decisively structural critique of power within such activities as well as a tactical critique about the consensus fetish. They forward the concept of “consensus reality” and define it as the “boundaries enclosing our ability to consent” (2012). They identify this as a “coordinated attempt” of the ruling class to maintain social hegemony though “common sense, civil discourse, and day-to-day life” (*Ibid.*). CrimethInc.'s tactics and propositions, black blocs and property destruction for example, were very often met with disgust and revulsion on the part of the “liberals” participating in horizontalist decision making at OWS; wartime reporter Chris Hedges implied that people like them were a “cancer” on the movement (*Truthdig* Feb. 6th, 2012). “Our opponents perceive us as disregarding consent,” explains CrimethiInc., “simply for opposing the terms of consensus reality” (CrimeThinc 2012)[14]. They saw in the inclusivity of consensus in OWS a vehicle for the power plays of the hegemonic minority that OWS had claimed to be against. Without critically attacking the bases of inequity, consensus will reproduce inequity, emboldened under a mask of alterity. This fact pervaded the sociopolitical history of InexFilm as well as the Koko Lepo kindergarten and youth program until both were radically restructured, an account of which I will cover in chapter three.

The consensus 'process' at Inex

Very few people enjoyed the meetings, and almost none of those that did came from the ranks of 'social-users'. Despite being formally based on consensus, there was very little in an average Inex assembly meeting that kept the ideological bases of the model in good faith. Men shouted and postured, rarely learning the names of the female social-users, and intensity, not reason or argumentation, was all too often the deciding factor in many meetings. The diplomatic mediator strata who believed in the potential of the meetings as an organizing and communicative tool, were alternately condemned and approved by 'the anarchists' depending on the prevailing political tides of the space; they were condemned for abandoning the ideals behind the process, but approved of as

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[14] Crimethinc.. ‘Breaking with Consensus Reality’. https://crimethinc.com/2013/04/23/breaking-with-consensus-reality-from-the-politics-of-consent-to-the-seduction-of-revolution

at least nominally competent discussants. The bar, by even our own standards, was set quite low on among the anarchists as to who was considered a productive participant. The social-users were ever on the defensive, constantly explaining and reexplaining the ideas of anti-authoritarian autonomy, gender equity, anti-racism and anti-fascism to the cultural-users who regularly made use of the meetings as non-binding trials of such ideas. This is, in a large part, because the objections of 'the anarchists' to proposals of the cultural users were often of an explicitly ideological nature. Preventing “gray-zone” musical acts, voicing opposition to commercial influences in the squat, and addressing and condemning racist and sexist practices were all exhausting regular struggles for the 'anarchists’ in the assembly meetings. Interestingly, in interviews after the death of the squat, none of my ‘cultural’ informants rejected the importance of these issues outright, but all singled out ‘the anarchists’ as acting ineffectively, too harshly, or being unwilling to explain our positions in an accessible way as a central problem in the running of the squat. It is indubitably true, however, that when the mediator strata sided with the anarchists in these issues, as they inevitably did after much consternation, such conflicts would temporarily be laid to rest in the consensus process.

Typically, the meetings were facilitated by those few considered “neutral” in the ongoing struggles at the space, though occasionally one or two of the anarchists were called upon to perform the role. The facilitator had a voice as well in the meeting, though it was their responsibility to put it in the proper order of requests to speak along with everyone else. This, more often than not, proved to be more of an ideal than an actual practice, and meetings very often flew off the rails and degenerated into threats of violence, name-calling, and walk-outs. Unlike Bray's “liberal libertarians”, however, all involved in the Inex general meetings appeared to understand the direct relationship each meeting had to future actions. To the processes' credit, meetings almost never ended in stalemates and the more talented facilitators were usually able to produce actionable guideposts by the end of each meeting that were generally acceptable, if not grumbled about or fought over in the concrete halls and schizoid salons afterwards.

Consensus with and without meaning

Despite enjoying general support in the squat, the consensus process was used or bypassed on more than one occasion by calls to revert to majority rule. The first of these had come some time before my arrival to the squat by the aforementioned Dejan, and the second in the last year of the squat's operations by Đura. Finally, both of them conspired to purge the squat of anarchists through a petition and backed by external violence; each of these attempts enacted under the pretense of liberal ideals of non-violence and free speech, thought to be under threat by the ‘direct actions’ of the anarchists. This majoritarian tendency within the consensus decision making structure is as old as the squat itself. “It was not clear,” recalls Marinka, an anarchist organizer of the infoshop, “to some it *was* based on consensus and some others were thinking about voting and they were discussing the same thing in every meeting.” The 1st anniversary of the space prompted a meeting dedicated to establishing firm organizational principles, including the question of the consensus process. Two of my anarchist comrades reflected on this meeting in an interview:

> Marinka: It wasn’t finalized, it was just discussed. And I had the impression that the same things were being discussed over and over again.

> Petar: At one point it was like, “Ok, so we are going with consensus decision making?” and somebody was like, “OK, so let’s vote on this!” (laughs)

When I posed this question to Stojko, a prominent artistic figure in the squat, his response shed as much light on this theme as it cast shadows:

> Inex failed. There are lots of systems made by Plato and Aristotle how the country or something should work or be organized and we didn’t use any of these examples ... of how little societies should work. It was my biggest disappointment. I like that we were searching like a living organism how to function, but we should also change every month. Like, let's this month use the communist system, or like 51 percent percent of people decide what 49 should do, democracy you know (laughs), in democracy 49 percent of the people are doing what they don’t want. Tyranny of the majority. We should like test, or something, i don't know what.

Stojko’s response is completely consistent with my own memories and record of resistance to a formalized consensus process. For the anarchists, the consensus process was meant to function as a tool to prevent and, indeed, condemn authoritarian and majoritarian rule. Ideally, it should have cut away the politics of the macrocosm in order to create a heterotopic/exilic inversion of the macropolitics of rule and mass mobilization in a free and autonomous microcosm. For the mediating strata, it was a communicative field where organizational tactics and positions could be measured and rationalized. For the loosely conglomerated section of the squat called ‘the artists’, it appears to have been a confusing formality that stuck around well after its turn was up. Echoing Marinka’s sentiments above, Stojko continued, “They were repeating, repeating, repeating!” he responded when asked about his eventual abandonment of the assembly meetings. However, Stojko’s frustration was not with the inability of organizational concepts to stick, but with the very function of the meeting itself. “The words lose their meaning and then they start fighting against some third thing,” he continued, “the better way of solving things is to individually talk to people”. For a significant section of the squat, the consensus assembly was not a facilitator of collective organization, but instead a barrier to interpersonal communication. This conceptual impasse is central to understanding the bases of group formation and identification in Inex, which I have already addressed above, as well as the vitriol that characterized their symbolic displays.

Lepo
+
infoshop

Illustration 7: A "little graffiti" found in the bathroom of InexFilm affirming the close yet controversial relationship between the infoshop and the kindergarten

The game of sentiment: vitriol as an organizing principle

The heritage of interpretive anthropology is well-known, as are its contributions to the discipline. By focusing on how social actors present their world to each other, this approach 'others' the researcher and tasks her with translating a culture by drawing a map of shared meaning. With this map, it becomes possible to identify symbolic axes of significance upon which cultural displays of social power turn. In Geertz's canonical example, the “deep play” of ludicrous stakes in Bali's cockfighting scene expressed village status both to opponents and spectators (1973). While Geertz avoided this language in his essay, the Balinese cockfight is also very much about making *claims*. Making claims to status engenders a second-level wager. Geertz was uninterested in this wager since social relations following the cockfights went on very much as before; the cockfight, like seemingly every cultural ritual in the 60s and 70s, had definitive beginning, a chaotic liminal stage, and a satisfying recapitulation of the normative order in the end. Bringing an interpretive approach to Inex, however, requires us to ditch the statisfying ending and account for struggle and the ever-looming promise of a power-shift as the end game in war of symbols. In this section, I look to vitriolic aggression in the symbolic field, not entirely unlike Geertz's cockfight, as the key mechanism by which claims to order were made in the squat.

Graffiti: the front lines

The graffiti was, by and large, the preferred weapon of the symbolic wars that beset Inex's brief history. Enjoying the dual capacity to communicate linguistically while claiming space, graffiti proved ubiquitous in the squat and is as fine a place as any to address the vitriol of the Inex cockfight. Graffiti was often the subject of the general meetings at the squat as the approach to graffiti taken by the artists and anarchists was, at first, quite different. Many of the artists considered graffiti to be purely an expression of their artistic sentiments, in fact one of the rooms of the squat was occupied by people identifying themselves specifically as graffiti artists. It is true that the squat was visually much enhanced by the prevalence of detailed and colorful murals that had no open political character and might, for our purposes, be considered politically neutral. The issue had always been, if the reader will forgive my etymological redundancy, with the 'little graffiti' that seems to reproduce itself like mice all over the hard corridors of Inex. This little graffiti became a living conversation and a dead record of struggles and claims in the squat and, as the struggles progressed and grew more open, some of this little graffiti became quite large indeed.

One particularly interesting category of little graffiti, at least within the broader category of 'vitriolic', was that of the "Fuck ___!" variety. This category appeared rather late in the organizational struggles and claims of InexFilm, and while not particularly dominant in spatial terms, "Fuck ___!" graffiti proved particularly salient and discursive terms. One exchange in particular stands out. Shortly after the Inex lounge was mildly renovated and cleaned up in order to accommodate an anniversary party being thrown by the cultural users, an irregular member of the Koko Lepo collective, Nevena, drunkenly scribbled "Fuck art!" in paint pen on the freshly repainted black bar top. This produced an immediate scandal in the squat whereby the anarchists as a whole were denounced for their combative attitude. At almost the same time, however, "fuck the anarchists" was written in the vicinity of the infoshop downstairs. One of the anarchists responded by simply writing the word "consensually" – *konsensualno* – underneath it. This fact was relayed in the general meeting as evidence that this attitude was not only not one-sided, but that it could easily be handled within the existing framework of the Inex graffiti regime. Some days later, the issue appeared to have been settled with the simple and modestly written statement, "fuck everyone, it's good for your health", which many believed had been written by a passing guest to the squat.

A thin description of this exchange would appear rather obvious; to frustrated factions of the shared space expressing their disdain through graffiti. A thick description, however, unveils far more complex process of symbolic ordering and making. It is interesting, for instance, that the original graffiti was directed at art in general, not any particular person, yet it was received personally by a relatively cohesive group of people, many of whom would not describe themselves as artists. Likewise, the response was directed at a group of people, even though many of those whom it was directed to would not self describe as anarchists. The shared nature of this symbolic universe is laid out in stark clarity. Despite the categories and subjects employed in the stock graffiti having weak ties at best to actual people working in the squat, everyone in the squat understood their significance in personal terms. Furthermore, this exchange was among the first to make the internal power struggles at the heart of Inex visibly concrete and publicly accessible. This graffiti exchange spoke to that existing struggle, but it also served to define that struggle in more or less concrete terms, providing those terms were shared with the squats users. Through this graffiti exchange, Miloš the DJ became an 'artist' just as Nevena from Koko Lepo, an ideologically mixed collective, became 'anarchist'.

A similarly subliminated cockfight occurred in the Inex courtyard long after the expulsion of Gricko, discussed in Chapter Three, from the space. After clearing some brush and debris from the south-facing wall, an apparently old piece of small graffiti saying, "Gricko was here" in English stood uncovered. This was at a time when Koko Lepo was beginning to redefine itself and deal more aggressively with its internal ideological differences; the shared memory of Gricko being very much on the minds and lips of the collective members in that moment despite his otherwise lack of presence in the general mentality of Inex as a whole. Privately, 'the anarchists' inside Koko Lepo and in the infoshop had become aware of a recent revival in overt sexism in the squat, which they had all associated symbolically with Gricko, his expulsion seen as a past victory in the fight for gender equity which now appeared to be lapsing back into style of the inimical profane. The discovery of this graffiti artifact prompted a quick and decisive reaction; we, meaning myself and members of the infoshop as well as unaffiliated anti-authoritarian's in the squat, retained the basic sentiment of the graffiti but added the phrase, "and got kicked out for sexism", after it. Within a couple of days, someone had edited it once again, removing choice words so that the graffiti read, "Gricko was here and got out." I personally responded by reasserting Gricko's troubling involvement in the squat by writing, "Gricko was here and got kicked out for sexual assault", with the term "sexual assault" underlined several times. The invisible defense responded to this addition by painting over the entire section of wall in black paint. Unwilling to let even passively apologetic sentiments towards Gricko go unmet, we transformed this 'little graffiti' exchange into a large one; during a scheduled cleaning action of the info shop myself and a couple of others decided to paint an axe over the black area with the sentence "this machine kills sexists", a reference to what was written on the infoshop’s own ax, as I will elaborate on in the following section. For good measure, thick smatterings of red paint adorned the edge of the axe blade. The murals stood unmolested for several days until someone, unseen yet again, replaced the axe with a picture of a flower though leaving the written sentiment unedited. While this flower was seen, yet again, as somehow a passive apology for Gricko, it was vague enough to end the skirmish. Soon enough, new construction filled the wall and the field of battle is laid to rest.

Here once again we see the ordering power of symbols that are shared even as they are contested. Prior to this exchange it was suspected, but not known, that there were still pro-Gricko voices at Inex. This exchange validated those suspicions by bringing them into a shared space, anonymous as it was. Had these sentiments been brought forward in a general meeting, which, simply put, would never have happened at this point, there is no doubt that they would have met fierce and long-term opposition. By confining them to the symbolic sphere, however, by sublimating them in yet another graffiti cockfight, the social order of the squat was made clear in a shared space, yet the writers exposed themselves to no serious threat. In this case, the struggle would remain symbolic, though I hypothesize that it was the field of communication embodied by graffiti that was chosen precisely to prevent its operatives from taking on any serious risk within a more governing body like the Inex general assembly. Because their position was tenuous, the pro-Gricko faction anonymized itself while still engaging in a communicative act.

Finally, graffiti played part in the Exodus of the artists from Inex. As mentioned above, a rumor that the owner was ready to reclaim the space prompted a general panic in the squat. The social users had resolved to remain until they received definitive confirmation of the owners intentions, which had not yet appeared. The cultural users, by contrast, hastily departed the squat attempting to strip much of its material value in the process. After the social users set up a new locked gate in the front of the squat, somebody managed to break into the building through the lower floors and steel thousands of euro worth of audio equipment and other things. Before leaving, they tagged one of the doors near the kitchen upstairs with an inverted anarchist “circle-a” symbol. This confirmed the suspicions of the anarchists that the cultural users were stealing from them, a suspicion bolstered by the fact that Đura was actually caught trying to steal a laptop from a Furija anarchist. With this final graffiti, the series of thefts was given an ordering character in the political field, tying a very real material cost to a definitively ideological divide. Graffiti, as meaningful practice in a symbolic field, makes claims not only to spaces, but also to activity; it puts actions into a culturally observable lexicon and it maps, both spatially and mentally, the social structure that it expresses.

Axes of Significance and Dejan's Symbolic Beheading

After appropriating Đura’s former room on the ground floor for Koko Lepo, recounted in chapter three, a small hand ax went missing. Its reported value fluctuated wildly over the next few days but the assumption of who was guilty remained consistent: the anarchists stole the ax. This was not, to my knowledge, true, but one could be forgiven for wondering since it was the anti-authoritarian element of Koko Lepo that broke his lock off the door and claimed the room containing the ax for themselves. I actually do remember what the ax looked like. It was a quality hatchet though too small for wood chopping, a constant need in the winters at the squat, but it suited Đura’s fabricated ‘Dothraki warrior’ aesthetic he had recently begun to cultivate. The issue of the ax continued to pop up in Inex meetings and there seemed to be a general conviction growing on the other side of the aisle that the anarchists, Koko Lepo, or perhaps even their ‘gypsy’ friends were undoubtably guilty. After some initial denials, we by-and-large stopped caring about the ax completely. This dismissive attitude was interpreted by Đura as yet another offense and he spent at least one meeting pacing around the room dragging a large stick with him, possibly to appear more menacing and serious as he continued his accusations. This came to a head when a sometimes-resident of the squat associated with both the infoshop and the kindergarten was physically attacked and menaced by Đura with just such an object while he was sorting materials in Koko Lepo's new room.

There was no unified response to any of this beyond a vocal complaint and denunciation in the meeting. Speaking about these events with the our attacked comrade and others in the infoshop one night, we mused that the only ax of any real quality was one purchased recently by the infoshop. Inex users had come to rely on this ax, theoretically including the 'anti-anti-fascists' among the "fucking artist" so one of us, who remembers which, had the notion to use a paint pen to write "This machine kills fascists," Woody Guthrie's immortal slogan, in highly visible text along its handle. The image of our ideological nemesis relying on an antifascist symbol for their quotidian fuel needs brought some of us great pleasure in an extremely tense period. As I recall, Đura himself bought another ax before ever stooping to borrow the infoshop's.

Long after the exodus of the artists and a short time before we anarchists abandoned the space as well, we put the anti-fa ax, dubbed "Woody", to one final task. Long ago, Dejan had placed a mediocre orange sculpture resembling a man with a raised hand made out of polyurethane foam in various places around the squat before finally putting it to rest in the garden. The kindergarten attendees from Koko Lepo had abused it and, by this time, its lower hand had gone missing, revealing a portion of its rebar skeleton. It appeared to us the monumental remnant of a dead dictatorship, thus in need of a good toppling. I retrieved Woody from the infoshop and, with a couple comrades and to the dismay of a visiting musician friend of mine witnessing the whole ordeal, we took turns trying to decapitate the brittle monument until finally the head gave in, bending at a violent and unnatural angle away from the body. Apart from the psychic catharsis this act provided, it also embodied a definitive political position; only the ideal, in this case, antifascism, is sacred in the heterotopia. The antifascist ax, originally a utilitarian purchase, acquired the force of the sacred through its ideological inscription in the space. It became imbued with the power to sacrifice within its symbolic field; the ax, made sacred though its inscription, allowed us condemn Dejan's monument as profane through its destruction.

Lefty and Bebe: the two-taled dog

Before concluding this chapter, I offer one final vignette that returns our focus to the sacrifice, gifting, and the problem of exilic space. On Halloween night 2014 on my way to a party at the squat, I watched helplessly as a young black pitbull-mix was struck by a speeding BMW. Confused and heartbroken, I summoned a comrade from Koko Lepo with a special predilection for animals to come and assess the situation with me. We decided to drive him to the squat and leave him in the warm kindergarten overnight. If he survived till morning, we would decide what to do.

Illustration 8: Lefty/Bebe in his temporary home in the kindergarten

He did. Over the next few days, we managed to assemble a team of caregivers consisting of myself and two other comrades from the extended Belgrade anarchist/left scene to monitor the dog and we eventually even managed to obtain a life-saving surgery. His right front leg was amputated and rear leg was useless until the industrial-looking surgical metal rods inside of it healed over, thus he was christened “Lefty”. Solidarity donations of money and food were arranged for him and he bounced between spaces in the squat occupied by the anarchists, much to the chagrin of the 'artists' who worried that the building was becoming a zoo. Others made a lot of noise about the possibility of the dog dying in the space which was mildly ironic since Dejan had only a year-or-so earlier been chastised for burning the corpse of a dead dog in the backyard of the squat for recreation.

Lefty, as it turned out, already had a name. When Kristina, a teenage member of Ibn's extended family and expecting mother acquired him some months prior, they had given him the name “Bebe”. Bebe was well known in the settlement and both the children and a certain spate of adults liked him; this fact alone made him rather special as most dogs in the slum are viewed as vermin. There is rarely love lost for even the most wretched of animals in *Deponija*, nonetheless, Bebe found himself surrounded by throngs of children and his caretakers, myself included, were confronted regularly in the settlement with questions about his well-being and condition. During our kindergarten sessions, Bebe became the star of a cautionary tale about safety when crossing the street. Teary-eyed children scratched his furry snout and gawked in pensive fascination at his post-surgery wound.

When it became known in Inex that the dog had come from the settlement, it appeared to fuel a growing sense of resentment against the kindergarten collective. Furthermore, the dog's presence in anarchist-controlled spaces at the squat emphasized, somehow, the ever-growing divisions in this cold war between the 'social' and 'cultural' aspects of the squat. Once more, the slum's presence in the squat embodied the antagonism between the opposed yet integrated interests of the users in the space. The dog offered, briefly, a window for attacking 'the anarchists' without the usual recourse to racism or sexism. Bebe absorbed the sins of the social activists and their gypsy allies and, in true form, the demands for sacrifice were inevitable. Several users who would eventually come to form the reactionary ‘'Artist Collective'’ quickly demanded the dog's expulsion from the squat under the aforementioned pretenses and it was not long before he was found a temporary home in a semi-formal city shelter.

Some time before he left, however, Kristina approached me in the settlement with her brother Riza at her side. She clutched her newborn daughter in her arms and fixed her soft, disheartened gaze on me. Riza did the talking, “My sister wants you to have Bebe.” Up until this moment, I hadn't even considered Bebe as something that could be given and I immediately felt ashamed for not approaching her more formally about him earlier. “She knows that you helped him a lot and she thinks that you can care for him better than she can,” he continued, “she only wants to know how he is.” It was not custom for someone, regardless of her gender, to be spoken for while standing right in front of the listener. Kristina was eccentric, but her silence was not the result of social awkwardness; grief and perhaps even guilt had muffled her usually boisterous voice. Her silence was simultaneously humbling and demanding; she sought vindication for her decision. I did my best, “We think he might have a home in Germany,” I responded, which happened to be true at the time, “a lot of people have been helping to make sure he gets better.” I tried to counter this personal transfer of Bebe's ownership by emphasizing the collective process involved in his care. The word “Germany” was all she needed and Kristina let free a polite smile, thanked me, and slipped back into her home. From that moment, her immediate relations treated me and my associates with increased hospitality and enthusiasm. The dog which amplified tensions and difference in the squat, eased these same phenomena in the slum. Bebe, or 'Lefty' as he was called when he departed the squat, was one of many symbolic axes upon which our identity at Inex turned both as partners in solidarity with the residents of *Deponija* and adversaries to the 'cultural' hegemonic competitors of the squat.

More problematically, however, is the sacrifice made by Kristina through Bebe’s gifting. I would argue that relinquishing Bebe to us gave us an element of the sacred for Kristina and, apparently, her family. Cutting Bebe from *Deponija*, much as the doctor amputated his dying limbs, forced an irrevocable condemnation, the crossing of a symbolic rubicon which, while bringing Inex and *Deponija* together in one way, reinforced the structural and symbolic gulf between us in another. While we at Inex enjoyed the solidarity and collective action of caring for Lefty, we received no such solidarity from our friends in the settlement; we were able and willing to arrange money and care in a short period of time that was probably not available to Kristina, nor was she well-informed about Lefty’s treatment; instead, we received gratitude. Bebe had to be *given* in this context because simply to relinquish him to us, however progressive and friendly our intention, could only be one more little dispossession in an infinite procession: a do-gooder naively fixing cracks in the ghetto walls. Kristina found her way through this problem and sacrificed her own claim to the beast by re-writing the story of how he came to be in our care. Doing so, however, necessitated a cutting-away and condemnation of her own surroundings and elevating the space and people of Inex so that her giving up Bebe would become a sacrifice of the self. In our haste to help and our casual ignorance of potential claims on the animal by our own friends and neighbors in *Deponija*, we unwittingly positioned Kristina at the uncomfortable junction between two worlds, though squarely on her side of the border which we reinforced by taking the dog. Were she to have reached over and cut Lefty out of Inex denouncing and rejecting our incidental claim over him, we would have been shamed and condemned. Yet truly, it was I that made the first cut, condemning the settlement: one more condemnation, one more dispossession.

At a moment when the kindergarten collective, Koko Lepo, was struggling with their own identity as a mutual aid collective, trying hard to differentiate themselves from liberal aid groups and NGOs, Lefty’s aid was subject to none of this reflection and this left Kristina with the symbolic weight we ourselves were unwilling to bear. Once Kristina swallowed the shame that could have been ours, she also cut Lefty from Deponija, condemning herself in the process. I aided this endeavor, unaware of the episode’s significance at the time, by bringing in our German connection, invoking, as it were, Germany’s inestimable symbolic capital in *Deponija*. Inex was thus consecrated for those in *Deponija* connected to Bebe at the expense of *naselje* generally and Kristina personally. If the epistemology of aid is blind to the problem of the sacrifice, do-gooders cannot but echo and reinforce the psycho-social order of rule and ghettoization. The right to help must be given as a gift, it cannot be stolen.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have argued that InexFilm constituted a heterotopic and exilic space that ruptured the hegemonic turn to capitalist property relations in Belgrade, which should now be seen as fully matured. Through the sacrificial act of squatting, InexFilm became the “Other World of Experience Reversed” in Leach’s typology to be contrasted to “This World of Temporal Experience” where feelings of political impotency reign supreme. I extended the frame of sacrifice into the violent process of political identification in the squat and implicated the anarchists, myself among them, as the most ardent sacrifers in this process, though I have downplayed the presence of ritual elements to this end. Instead, I have chosen to forward the concept of “immanent violence” in opposition to “transcendent violence”, a dialectic borrowed from George Bataille, to make the case that the politics of the anarchists were fundamentally incompatible with those of their apolitical squatmates as well as the ever present ‘fascist’ threats outside of Inex’s walls. I then undertook an interpretive approach to the struggles over and against power in the squat, utilizing Eric Wolf’s rubric to set the stage within which the squats users enacted symbolically rich and inventive interactions, usually vitriolic and disruptive, though often tempered by moments of compromise and communicative inspiration. These interactions laid bare class dynamics in disputes over property as well as offered symbolic vocabularies for accounting for and struggling against those very dynamics. Tactics of rupture, conspiracy, mockery, and theft proved instrumental in maintaining Inex in a state of prolonged liminality, a condition encouraged by the anarchists and their inimical other alike through disputes over political identities, roles in the squat, and the general character of the space itself. Furthermore, I have endeavored to complicate the anthropological understanding of ‘consensus’, a key tactical element for both the anarchists and their inimical others in the squat, by elaborating the confused and contradictory ways it was employed by both. Finally, I returned to the sacrifice from the perspective of a consecrated object myself, made so through the gifting of a dog by a *Deponija* resident. In sum, I have undertaken this analysis as the first of two field studies, the second being that of the *Deponija* settlement to follow, that together will account for the painful experimental process that resulted in the Koko Lepo autonomous youth solidarity project, the key case study of this dissertation. The framework of the sacrifice will continue to guide this account, though its function and expression will change as we change field sites.

Chapter II: Deponija

Field site description [A]
The politics of the slum [B]
Control and the ‘gypsy race’ [C]
‘*Ciganizam*’ [D]

[II/A] Field site description

A basic introduction to *Deponija* and
informal Roma settlements in general

Deponija: Settling the wasteland

Deponija ('the Dump') is a mess of an urban location; it is the unsettled outcome of socialist urban planning and maintenance compounded by under-regulated neoliberal consumer waste management. As a place, however, as a collection of human beings and connections, *Deponija* is replete with significance. Its life as a settlement began in the early 1970s with a single guardhouse which grew into a small family settlement (Macura 2003). From discussions with families, it appears that the increasingly residential aspect of the dump was capitalized on by the City Waste Management firm, occasionally referred to as 'the State' within the settlement, who rented a spate of houses to some of their workers. This moment in the genesis of the settlement is less than clear in local narratives though the fact that many residents pay their rents to the city administration seems to support this account in general. The rest of the settlement appears to have grown autonomously and mostly informally into an independent neighborhood on the border between the Palilula and Karaburma municipalities; we refer to this original section of the larger settlement as 'mahala'.

The war in Kosovo brought a new wave of dwellers in the 90s and many of these newcomers formed their own subdivision in the slum, here known as the *naslelje* (settlement). *Naselje* is notably more impoverished compared to their neighbors in *mahala* and much less acclimated to Belgrade culture and society. The majority of residents here are urban collectors while a minority of them work for the city waste management. Unlike the residents of mahala who are almost entirely Muslim, about half of the residents of naselje are Christian. Most of the population speaks Romany and refers to themselves in highly variable and contingent terms ranging from *cigan* (gypsy) to Roma to *srb* (Serbian). This seems to depend largely on to whom they are speaking at the time and their personal experiences with each label. Despite the potentially interesting avenue this sort of identity play might offer, I will not be spending much space on ethnic identification apart from the most basic of background summaries.

Deponija's historical materiality is rooted in the historical exploitation of Yugoslavia's southern periphery, the racialization of gypsies as cultural nomads-cum-seasonal workers, and the chaotic recent history of privatization in Serbia tied, as it was, to the amplification of consumerism. It is a site of informal social and economic arrangements, built primarily from garbage, mixed with the uneven gaze of govermentality from the outside. Unusual forms of landlordism proliferate but are far from ubiquitous as many families own their homes even if they do not own the land upon which they are built. The property of the dump is private and relations between the residents of it and the owner appear to us strained and perhaps even hurtling towards disintegration. Most people in Deponija are very aware of their precarity yet are suspicious, and rightly so, of ongoing city initiatives to civilize these types of settlements through their demolition and transfer of their residents to formal shipping-container housing on the outskirts of the city. Deponija received its death sentence in 2003, though the date of execution has yet to arrive.

The conditions here are miserable. Residents complain that their children sleep with rats and snakes, a highly probable claim, and toxic waste water pours freely from an infinite cavalcade of trucks into a nearby river inlet where children often play. While some houses enjoy running water within their walls, others must carry water from street-side taps for drinking and washing. Trash is ubiquitous, the defining feature of the settlement's grim landscape. Afternoons are marked by the gliding haze of chemical smoke from the days burned rubber, plastic, and synthetic fabrics melted away from their valuable metal bounty. Nobody wants to be here; all eyes are fixed to the northwest where Germany’s mercurial promise beckons.

Illustration 9: Wild dogs on the roofs of homes in naselje

Roma informal slums: a general summary

About one-third of Belgrade's estimated 100,000 Roma-gypsy denizens are split between roughly 140 informal settlements[15]. According to 2008 government estimates, around 72 percent of such settlements Serbia-wide are either illegal or 'semi-legal', and around 43 percent of these, Deponija among them, are identifiable as 'slums'[16]. The numbers of slum-swelling Roma swelled dramatically during and following the war in Kosovo; it is estimated that up to 50,000 gypsies ended up in Serbia as refugees in this period, making-up 17 percent of the population of Serbia's informal settlements[17]. The remaining population of the settlements began to grow in some cases as early as the 1950s, though Deponija's history begins only in the 1970s.

Amnesty's last estimate puts primary school-enrollment in Serbian slums at a mere 10%, though the rate appears to be somewhat higher in Deponija. The attendance rate is, without a doubt, quite a bit lower than in a 'normal' Serbian neighborhood in the city, and those kids who do attend school do so irregularly, and many of them in nighttime adult education programs commonly endured by Roma students. As the majority of slum-dwellers are informally employed as collectors of the excretions of production and resellers of discarded consumer goods, children are often engaged alongside their parents in day-to-day productive and domestic/reproductive activities. Adolescent Elma, for instance, will stay home with her youngest siblings while her mother, father, and seven and ten-year-old brothers are off collecting. Schooling, needless to say, is difficult to acquire despite being highly valued in the settlement.

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[15] Amnest International. *Serbia: Time for a law against forced evictions*. 2011

[16] Amnesty International. *Home is more than a roof over your head: Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia*. 2011.

[17] Ibid. 21

Recent changes to Serbian law have made it possible for Roma refugees and their families to acquire medical booklets without first needing identification cards. Despite the fact that, since this law, seventy-six percent of Roma in Serbia have health cards, infant mortality rates in the settlements are far higher than in the general population, and the life expectancy of Serbian Roma are reportedly 10 years shorter than the general population (Bogdanovic, *et al.* 2007). These facts, far from inspiring the city to make deep structural interventions, have instead propelled the local State into a rampage of forceful eviction and demolition.

No Alternative: Evictions, Containers, and the Broken Promise of Social Housing

In recent years, clusters of forced evictions have beset informal Roma settlements throughout Belgrade and, despite proposed changes in eviction law, are likely to continue in the immediate future. The endgame of this violence is the relocation of slum-dwelling Roma to the absolute rural outskirts of the city limits. These actions are done under the banner of sanitation but should be seen as nothing other than a slow pogrom coupled with the paternalism of civilizing the savage Other.

Mass forced evictions began as early as 2002 with a relatively small endeavor in the Autokomanda district. The following year, the then-mayor of Belgrade announced a sweeping 12.5 million euro program to raze a hundred "unhygienic settlements" and relocate 50,000 Roma residents into 5,000 social flats. When effort to build the promised flats finally began in 2004, residents of the proposed site in Novi Beograd vigorously protested, forcing a cancellation of the project[18]. This would be repeated five years later in Ovca, stalling the second attempt to build the mandated housing[19]. In 2005, the resettlement plan expanded to include the relocation of Belgrade gypsies in abandoned houses in nearby villages but it was not until 2009 that the eviction mandate demonstrated its true power.

In the same year that the Law on Social Housing was passed in the Serbian parliament, Belgrade city authorities evicted 178 families and demolished 200 homes underneath the Gazela bridge in August, 2009. The action took place no more than six days after it's official plan had been approved; needless to say, the residents were given no or little warning. Of the 178 dispossessed, 114 families were relocated to 'temporary' housing in metal container settlements on the periphery of the city. The once-cohesive settlement was divided between seven locations, each relatively distant from the other[20]. Sporting a vaguely ironic name, the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia* allowed those the State had kicked to the curb a choice between living in remote apartment blocks, 'renovated' village houses, or money to rebuild their ruined homes elsewhere[21]. Families deported to southern Serbia received no support at all.

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[18] Amnesty International. *Home is more than a roof over your head: Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia*. 2011.

[19] Amnesty International. *Serbia: Roma still waiting for adequate housing*. 2015.

[20] Amnesty International. *Home is more than a roof over your head: Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia*. 2011.

[21] Amnesty International. *Serbia: Roma still waiting for adequate housing*. 2015.

2011 saw more forced evictions, most notably that of a dozen families under Pančevo bridge near the Deponija settlement. Again, these families were offered neither notice nor compensation for their losses[22]. The worst, however, occurred two months prior in the settlement of Belvil in Novi Beograd; one thousand Roma from 240 households lost their homes in a mass demolition attended by police and city officials. Four years later, no housing had been built for them and 127 families were still living in container settlements, having survived four harsh winters in metal boxes that were not provided with heaters, insulation, or bedding[23][24]. Non-Roma who have suffered eviction alongside their Roma neighbors, for instance at the Ratko Mitrović company buildings in 2010, received nothing at all, providing further fodder for racist indignation[25]. Despite the millions of euro pledged to their development, few social apartments have actually been completed and distributed in replacement of the homes destroyed in the informal settlements; proposed sites have been rejected in its turn for reasons ranging from a lack of research about who owns proposed properties to the racist reactions of local residents[26].

Those fated to molder in *kontejneri*, the metal shipping container housing, suffer in the summer from poor or absent ventilation as they do in the winter from poor or absent insulation. So-called "sanitary units" are the only places to wash both one's self and one's clothes, that is, when they actually work, and water drips from the metal ceilings of homes from cooking and the moisture of body heat. Authorities have gone so far as to restrict the construction of temporary meliorative additions like sun-shades and canopies leaving residents exposed to the elements when not inside their boxes, which measure 14m2 for families of up to five members[27]. Due to their remote locations, there is no possibility for gainful employment in the areas of the *kontejneri* and collectors have been forced to find spaces in the center of the city to hold their recyclables and equipment to which they must endure a grueling daily commute[28].

The container settlement is expected to civilize the "mangy gypsies"[29] through the rigorous policing of their lifestyle. Each container becomes a miniature laboratory whereby the panoptic Secretary for Social Protection, under the auspices of the contract each resident must sign, is granted the right (Article 9) to actively observe the families hygiene and order (Article 7), legal honesty, bureaucratic legibility, commitment to childhood education, employment, and "good etiquette towards the representatives of the Secretariat" (Article 11). Failure to abide by any of these conditions means immediate eviction.

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[22] Amnest International. *Serbia: Time for a law against forced evictions*. 2011

[23] Amnesty International. *Serbia: Roma still waiting for adequate housing*. 2015.

[24] Amnesty International. *Home is more than a roof over your head: Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia*. 2011.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Amnesty International. *Serbia: Roma still waiting for adequate housing*. 2015.

[27] Amnesty International. *Home is more than a roof over your head: Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia*. 2011.

[28] Amnesty International. *Serbia: Roma still waiting for adequate housing*. 2015.

[29] http://www.svevesti.com/a257628-zemun-polje-i-danas-protest-protiv-Roma

[II/B] The politics of the slum

Power, gender, and identity in *Deponija*

Deponija's **internal political economy**

A political-economic analysis of *Deponija* will permit us to escape the closed circuit of structure/function and instead look to the proliferation of lines of division and solidarity based on relational antagonisms and common conditions. We see, not a self-sustaining cultural or ethnic grounding, but a constantly contested living set of shifting categories which are expressed in transformative social conflict as much as in habitual social reproduction. Therefore, following Sharryn Kasmir and August Carbonella, I look to dispossession in all its hybridity to find the seed of both division *and* solidarity (2014). This requires me to look beyond the internal political mechanics of the settlement and to the "critical junctions" where situated struggles and organizational forms are antagonized by power dynamics on the global scale (Kalb 2005). *Habitus*, even as it reproduces normalcy and legibility in social practices, cannot be viewed, as it is with nationalists and anti-ciganists, as static and bound to the cultural field, but is indeed in constant flux, seeking out new linkages to match its ever-shifting dispositions even as it abandons old ones. The *habitus* of our agents in Deponija does not only encourage reproduction, but encourages escape; it is this escape where we find the influence of the global and a salient point of intervention for ethnographic work based on direct action. To borrow from Natalia Buier, anti-capitalist anthropology must necessarily be counterfactual, "recovering the possibility that things could have been different from what they are" (2016:32).

Internally, power within Deponija is nearly monopolized by an imposing figure named Ibn and his kin. Not everyone considers themselves within his sphere of influence, but most that do feel touched by his presence in powerfully negative ways. Parents are reticent to let their children around his, grandmothers spit and swear when his family passes their gates, and his extended network of allies loiters in the middle of the *naselje*, confronting and jeering at those unlucky enough to pass through them when they congregate. Ibn considers himself a community leader who helps families acquire what they need. Ibn once displayed a list of names of people he says are veterans of the Kosovo war that now reside in Deponija; he calls them "people he works closely with". He has lived in Deponija for over 40 years and rents both addresses and properties to a significant section of the settlement, though he is elusive about the real numbers he controls.

Ibn's self-image has been reinforced and confirmed by others; he possesses two certificates from NGOs testifying to his status as a 'community leader'. In 2002, Rota Club, the name of his private *kafana* in the settlement, was recognized by the International Roma Center as a space for "socializing and spreading friendship and amity in the interest of the Roma population" stating that the club will "gather the youth for socializing and fun through various sections" including sports, folklore, and "culture". Many of the locals, however, see it as a nuisance that only serves to cement Ibn's position in the *mahala* and *naselje* while disturbing the neighborhood with loud, raucous parties that go well on into the night and reportedly rob residents of their sleep. From Rota Club, Ibn collects rents and decides upon the distribution of things like housing materials to residents. "When organizations bring construction materials to help the Roma people here, they come to me," he explained with pride. Can one imagine a better local expression of James Ferguson's "anti-politics machine"?

While Ibn's primary source of power appears to come from his property holdings and ability to rent legal addresses, it is bolstered by his position as a community leader. Leadership is relational and, in Ibn's case, betrays a sordid class dynamic. As a gatekeeper of charitable transfers, Ibn positions himself at the critical junction between the collective dispossession of the Roma slum and the management strata of the NGO-ized State. The means of domestic reproduction in the settlement, at least in so far as home construction maintenance is concerned, rests partially in Ibn's hands. His status as a leader is reflective only of his structural position in greater schemes of power and, following Bourdieu's writings on metonymic leadership and representation, a group which is represented is a group dispossessed (1991:204). Ibn's class position remakes the position of those around him everyday and he can produce social and monetary capital simply by situating himself at the intersections of new avenues of proletarianization produced by charitable giving. Thus, NGOs and creative landlordism do much to establish the 'internal' political economy of Deponija.

Ibn is not the only one who has found ways to profit at these critical junctions. When a kindergarten collective member began working with some families to help them acquire medical cards, *naselje* resident Linda berated him. "You are an idiot on two counts," she explained, "firstly, you are doing for free what you could easily charge money for, and secondly, *I* was making money from this until *you* started giving it away for free!" Even well intentioned adjustment's in the State's relationship to the dispossessed, I.E. the easing of restrictions on medical access, open up new avenues for exploitation and micro-class dynamics, however fleeting. These moments of inter-family exploitation are no doubt encouraged by the scarcity-inspired competitiveness of urban collecting.

Informal waste-picking is a cottage industry and the home of the collector is run like a business. Occasionally, problems with constant capital such as vehicle repair or infrastructural work are shared with kin or friends, but each household is by-and-large its own fortified commercial interest. This is the material basis of the divisions riddling Deponija's social landscape. Early semi-cadastral mapping work of *Deponija* divided the slum into five residential groups (Macura 2003:7). The neighborhoods were defined by their historical development and internal cohesion primarily in regards to their migration history. Group E, our first families to the Koko Lepo program, were the newest arrivals, the majority being war refugees from Kosovo and whom were said to live in the worst conditions of all. The older settlers in groups A and B historically resent the Roma of neighborhood E (Jaksic 2005:339). Recyclables, while infinitely renewable in the long term, are of limited availability day-to-day. The rivalry generated from this fact between neighborhood E and neighborhood A and B has apparently persisted for over fifteen years (Macura 2003). This state continues today despite the diversification of labor in sections A and B, whose residents commonly do sanitation work for the city or, in at least one case, appear to be running an informal taxi service. To reiterate, neighborhood E, the group with whom Koko Lepo is historically closest, is referred to as '*naselje*' and A and B are collectively be called '*mahala*' following the common naming practices of the settlement. I must point out, however, that this division is not shared in the minds of all in *Deponija*; as irregular collective member and *mahala* resident, Djani, argued, “It's all the same settlement: same people, same place, same everything”.

***Deponija* divided**

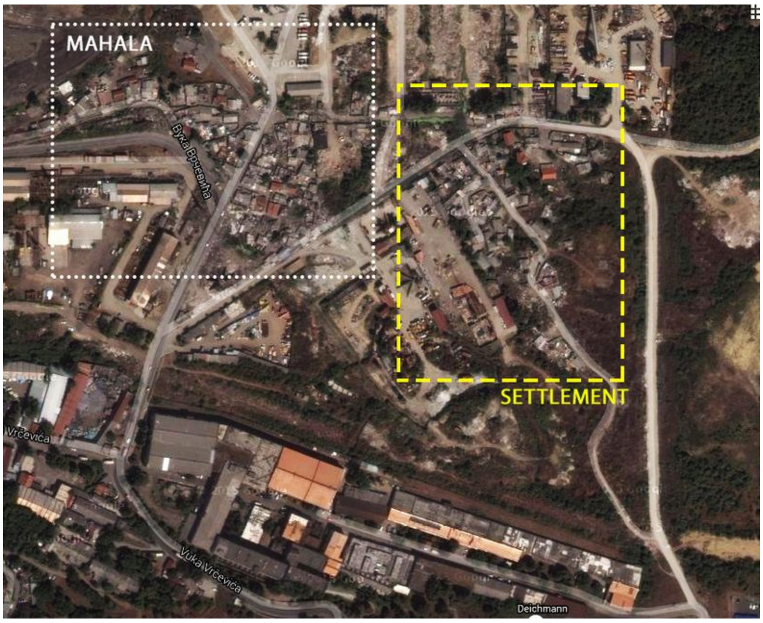

Illustration 10: Deponija's neighborhoods via Google Maps, 2016

Despite Djani's claims to commonality in the slum, at a get-together with some new *parents from mahala* to the Koko Lepo program, we heard a familiar story though told with a particular provincial twist. “Things used to be better here in *Deponija* before the wars,” Elma recounted, “it was only gypsies here.” Elma's use of the word *cigan* as an endonym is not uncommon in *mahala*, though its use is highly inconsistent, oscillating between pejorative and positive connotations so her clear preference for it as a positive self-description is notable. “But then the refugees arrived,” she continued, “and now it's a big mix with Albanians and Romanians *[sic]*!”. Elma's house was purchased legally from the waste firm that managed the dump upon which it was built. They live in one of the oldest inhabited parts of *Deponija*. As I noted above, there are a couple prevailing stories about the origins of this neighborhood. Whichever story is employed, the outcome is the same: there exists a deep historical, perhaps even 'ethnic', divide between the residents of the older *mahala* and the newer *naselje*. “They are wild,” complained Elma's husband Edison, “those families up there are no good!”. Our collective member, Adrijana, retorted that Koko Lepo has strong and positive relationships with many families up in *naselje*. Edison recanted a little. “Yes, it is true that there are some good people up there, good families,” his expression grew serious as he finished, “it is really the one family that is the real problem”. We knew which family he meant, the ruling caste of the *naselje*, “Ibn's,” we vocalized almost as if breaking a taboo as Edison nodded grimly in confirmation. This strikes me as clear evidence of how class antagonisms and general dispossession produce multiple expressions within the socio-political order.

While Edison’s recant shows that there are limits to the negative fetishization of these neighborhoods, real and enduring divisions have long been apparent in my collective’s past attempts to do shared activities with children from both *mahala* and *naselje*. Many *naselje* children and teens complain that the *mahala* kids are cruel to them, and we ourselves have noticed a certain snobbery in the way that *mahala* children relate to their *naselje* counterparts. One of my key informants and an early parent participant in the kindergarten eventually declared, on no uncertain terms, that if we continue to bring children from the *mahala*, we can “forget” his children. He claims that his eldest daughter has stopped attending school due to the bullying she suffers from older girls from *mahala*, a phenomenon we have witnessed firsthand. That said, his daughter has also told us in the past that she was unable to attend on certain occasions due to her domestic responsibilities imposed upon her by the long working hours of her parents, though I imagine there is much truth to both explanations. Another ‘helper’ in our kindergarten program, a fifteen year old girl from the bottom of the *naselje*, has even expressed fear of the *mahala*, employing on at least one occasion the epithet “*čergari*” to describe them, a common derogatory term meaning “tent dwellers” for especially rootless and supposedly child-thieving gypsies of semi-mythical character. In her mind, the divisions in *Deponija* between the recent arrivals of *naselje* and the more established *mahala* denizens was not even articulated in terms of superiority or bullying, but in terms of alien violence. So deeply runs the chasm between the two neighborhoods.

Ethnicity is another divisive axis of inequality in the settlement, as alluded to above. In Koko Lepo’s early history, we sometimes heard our students’ families derisively refer to the extended family of Ibn as “Ashkali”, an epithet that some of them very occasionally employed themselves, though 'Roma' is the preferred identification of Ibra’s immediate family. “Ashkali” is a highly contested identity that came to political prominence in Serbia after the wars in Kosovo brought an influx of refugees claiming it as their ethnicity. Some researchers and Roma activists see the Ashkali as a recently invented and divisive ethnic marker designed to create distance both from 'Roma' and 'Egyptian' gypsy groups, mainly in Kosovo and Serbia, claiming mythic roots as diverse as Biblical Palestine, ancient Rome, and Persia. They are reportedly viewed by some Roma as “Albanian-speaking Roma” who have traded in Roma traditions for Albanian customs (Čvorović 2006:54)[1]. Others look to the unraveling political landscape of Kosovo in the 90s to find the origins of the Ashkali identity, and accuse the Serbian state's collusion with 'Egyptian' political leaders to formalize Balkan Egyptian identity to reduce the Albanian population of Kosovo on paper, while those who would later become Ashkali were those who sided more with Albanian national politics; in this reading, the Ashkali identity is merely an artifact of the identity struggles which saturated the 1990s in Kosovo (Lichnofski 2013:37). What matters most in our case, however, is that it functions as a term of distinction and, like almost every identity term heard in *Deponija*, is used inconsistently and according to a given situation. For this reason, I assumed for almost three years that the term had only shallow significance in the settlement. My guess had been that the past usage of the term to describe at least part of Ibn’s kin despite Ibn’s own insistence that he is “r*om*” served more to ‘other’ them from the *naselje* than it did to refer to a specific ethnic genealogy. While there may be truth in this, I was recently given a stark reality check by a young Ashkali friend of mine in the *naselje*. I asked him to verify my assumptions about the waning importance of the ethnic epithet in the settlement, but he unequivocally refuted them, saying,

> Ashkali are a kind of Albanian, very different from gypsies (Roma). They are not brought up to steal and are not problematic, etc. Generally I prefer to hang out with Serbs over gypsies, so yes, [Ashkali] is a very important identity.

Obviously, distinction from ‘gypsies’ is indeed a key part of this identity in my young respondent’s view, but it is easy to underestimate the personal importance such terms have even in a microcosmic space of exile like *Deponija*, a space that is anything but homogeneous.

What the ruling class does when it rules: the return of the prince

At the end of October, in 2015, Skolica resolved to take the kids to a film at one of Belgrade's last remaining socialist-era cinemas. Since the movie started at 17:00, we conspired to meet at the entrance to the settlement two hours earlier to allow enough to time to explain the plan to parents and collect god-knows-how-many kids for the public bus ride to the center. Upon approaching the settlement we noticed a group of three boys harassing an extremely old and frail women from the settlement. As I closed in, I was able to identify her as Sabrija's grandmother, Dora, an ancient and serious woman whom many of our kindergarten children suspected to be a witch. She had taken to hiding behind a vehicle crossing gate next to the guard station. The guard himself stood outside of his box making his presence known but not interfering with the increasingly brutal abuse by the children. I immediately recognized one of the kids.

> *“Ibra? Is that Ibra?” I asked loudly in his direction as soon as we were close enough to intervene.*
>
> *“Ja...”, he responded in German, squinting his eyes to see who this white adult was that knew his name.*
>
> “*You don't remember me? From the kindergarten, man!”*

Ibra's narrow eyes lit up in recognition and a smile broke out over his face. Ibn was one of our first students. Son of the village patriarch, he was also a holy terror and his departure to Germany over a year ago elicited more relief than sadness. For whatever Stockholm-syndrome-like reason, however, I did actually miss him and was happy to see his chubby little face, though more than a little disconcerted that the ruling family had returned to the settlement. This was an epic political shift for the *naselje* section of Deponija. Essentially, the slum had been without a ruling stratum and now the lord had come to reclaim his holdings.

While we were distracting Ibra and his even-more-violent older companion, Gavril, grandma slipped away cursing them under heavy breaths. Gavril was highly aggressive and gave the impression of a wild momentary instability and possibly even some kind of substance abuse. I hadn't seen any of the children in *Deponija* abusing glue, but our young friend here showed all the signs. He pushed up against me in great displays of bravado and sexually harassed our female companion; this was her first interaction with the *Ancien Regime* of the settlement. I pulled him aside and as he spitefully broke away from me to bother yet another local entering the settlement, I followed him and challenged his aggressive behavior. This challenge would later be emphasized when we continued into the settlement and were greeted warmly by his family around Rota Club. Historically, it had been under the auspices of Ibn that Koko Lepo made any headway at all in the early days of its activities.

While it is true that a certain percentage of the houses in *Deponija* are squatted or built from scratch, it is also true that Ibn, Ibra's father, extracts rents from many residents of the settlement or allows usage on the basis of favors and debts. For instance Elvis, a kindergarten father who features prominently in chapter four, did not rent the property he lived in but rather the address owned by the ruling family. The Ibn dynasty fits quite nicely into Mike Davis' account of landlordism as a global phenomenon in slum society:

> Landlordism is in fact a fundamental and divisive social relation in slum life world- wide. It is the principal way in which urban poor people can monetize their equity (formal or informal), but often in an exploitative relationship to even poorer people. (2006:42)

Ibra's father filled in the temporal and spatial gap between those first few arrivals in the 90's to the new section of the slum and those who followed. He owns the only vaguely 'social' space in the entire settlement, Rota Club, mentioned on above, which remained locked and empty throughout the entirety of his stay in Germany. His children and those of his immediate family once walked around the slum like they owned the place, which was partially true; they demand, they do not ask. Their power is exemplified by the viciousness with which little Ibra attacked Dora at the entrance. The grandmother is an important figure with much cultural weight in *Deponija*, as she is in Serbia generally. While Sabrija's grandmother was far from politically powerful, to abuse her with such blatant contempt and violence is far from normal and reflects a great sense of invulnerability.

It was impossible to tell whether or not the unease I felt was the result of my own memories of dealing with his violent and relatively entitled children or if there really was a darkened general mood looming over settlement. Even the wild dogs avoided Ibra and his cohorts. The teachers of Koko Lepo, while having some sort of 'protected outsider' status in the settlement, had always been treated less like friends and more like 'the help' for the families of Ibn, with the notable exception of Djems, whose impact on Koko Lepo I will describe in the next chapter. As a dominant Other, the rules for interacting with them and their children are less clear than with the rest, perhaps in an inverted sense as those norms for relating to Koko Lepo. This lack of clarity is also reflected in the former assignment of the ‘Ashkali’ identity on Ibn’s extended family, which at times seemed definitive and at others, especially as of late, entirely absent.

By way of a postscript to this vignette, not quite a year later, I was walking into the settlement with collective member Mara to check on the new space for the kindergarten. On the way in, we stopped to help Elmedina's grandmother with her groceries. As we passed Sabrija's grandmother's shack, Elmedina explained that they had recently moved away. “Everyone in the *naselje* would help her with a hundred dinars here and there," she recalled, "but look what Ibn's children have done!" She pointed to the busted fencing and obviously gutted structure where Sabrija and Dora once lived. "They took everything!", she lamented. Solidarity and mutual aid between people in the *naselje* is not an inclination shared by the ruling class.

Gender, power, and agency

Gender is among the most central dynamics in the political economy of *Deponija*. It is a powerful axis of inequality that is shaped and reproduced as much by the internal divisions of labor and power as it is by the historical materialism of the world capitalist system. I am fully indebted to Silvia Federici's unmatched history of the class struggle inherent in the domestic sphere. Federici understands the labor category of 'woman' as one constructed from the violent, possibly counter-revolutionary forces of the State and the rise of capitalist rule in the Middle Ages which created her as the "carrier of specific work-functions"; gender is a "specification of class relations" (14). Using this as the basis of analysis, I look the cultural critics of patriarchy to outline the most common vehicles of class rule within the domestic sphere. Sherry Ortner's dyadic theory of patriarchy provides a strong basis from which to view the various axes of inequality that make up a patriarchical social structure beyond the relationship of heterosexual males to females. Ortner finds patriarchy in the relation between a patriarchal figure and the men surrounding him, the heteronormative relations between men in general, and then finally the relationship between men and women (2014:535). This not only elucidates the various relationships through which patriarchy is reproduced, but also the depth of its social roots. It is not merely a matter of team a versus team b, but is in fact a holistic social system with many avenues for expression. Federici's contribution, of course, allows us to see these 'dyads' as class relations instead of mere ethnographic details.

Finally, I acknowledge the contribution of David Graeber's writings on the relation of property in the development of masculine honor and its expression in the sexual control of women in their families. Graeber points out that proletarianization and the social stratification of classes within patriarchal social systems opens up the possibility of the commodification of the female body and the very real prospect of prostitution in lieu of any other viable economic activities for social reproduction. The cult of virginity then rises both as an expression of value, that is to say, as a body free from the deepest deprivations of poverty, while ironically re-commodifying that same body through arranged marriage wherein the social viability of uniting two families and the discipline of the potential domestic laborer is fetishized as the virgin womb (Graeber 2014:177,184). Okely's work in the UK with Traveler women remains the quintessential anthropological analysis of the honor and gender dyad in 'gypsy' sociality. She rightfully de-centers gypsy culture, whatever that might mean, as the sole progenitor of gender inequity and convincingly argues that the origins of female honor in such conditions stems as much from Gorgio, non-gypsy, fantasies about gypsy women within their unique economic niche as much as it does from masculine insecurities reproduced within the exploitative hierarchy of their 'cultural' position in England (1994). Prostitution, again, develops an ideological centrality, despite Okely's inability to establish it as a common practice in her field site. Gypsy women's assumptions about Gorgio female sexuality also play a powerful role in the formulation of sexual expectations in the Traveller camp, not as a counterposition based on freedom and choice, but as a sort of savagery imagined in terms of filth and carelessness. Okely, thus, allows us to write “against culture”, in Abu-Lughod's words, and reformulate supposedly culturally determined practices as historically and economically contingent politics of relation. In order for patriarchy in gypsy settlements to meet critique, it must be placed within a relational context of the hegemonic culture surrounding it; a culture that imagines gypsies as timeless and exotic instead of integrated into a larger hierarchical and exploitative order

From this triadic approach of class struggle, patriarchal hierarchy, and the external social integration of internal value patterns, we can launch into a grounded ethnographic view of gender's political economy as it is really lived by the female residents of *Deponija*. We can see how respect intersects with antagonistic relations of class and appreciate the agency of the girl participants in the Koko Lepo youth program as more than merely victims of patriarchy, but potentially disruptive agents of change.

To speak of agency in the settlement with regards to women of any age is a complex and confusing endeavor. While complaints about abuse and even terror are not difficult to come by, the relative autonomy claimed by individual women varies wildly from house to house. Elma's mother, Linda, for instance, is an outspoken and authoritative figure in the household. While her husband might talk a misogynistic game, maintaining a Facebook presence replete with symbolically violent and objectifying sexual imagery, it is clear to anyone entering the house where domestic authority resides in practice. However, much of Linda's autonomy comes at the expense of her daughter. When Linda joins her husband on collecting excursions or goes shopping, it is Elma who is tasked with watching over the children and protecting the house. Elma is a bit of a firebrand herself, however, and has learned how to stand up for herself over time and has even expressed an interest in learning martial arts. That said, like her mother, Elma is subject to the same gendered restrictions as her mother and reproduces them through her beliefs and practices, arguing, at pace Okely's findings in her own English field sites decades ago, for increased sexual control over women in the settlement, victim-blaming in at least one sexual assault, and tying Elma securely to to well-defined domestic sphere of reproductive labor..

It must never be claimed that Roma groups are inherently culturally sexist. While it is true that a generalized sexual division of labor and patriarchal social norms are prevalent in what we might loosely and cautiously call ‘Roma culture’ on average (Nirnberg 2011), it is also true that these norms and hierarchies are prevalent everywhere on average. Roma groups are subject to a very particular scrutiny with regards to gendered oppression due, at least in part, to a Western fascination with the bodies of Roma women (Oprea 2012). The “white man's burden” amplifies the visibility of these dynamics as it reinforces the racialization of the Roma as savage and distant from White civilization, as seen in words of a White 'feminist' critiquing Roma feminist activist Ethel C. Brooks:

> I am sorry, but you can’t claim both: If you want to claim feminism, then you must give up your claim to a Romani identity. Patriarchy and oppression to women are central to your culture; to be a feminist means renouncing being a Romani woman. (2012:2)

On the other hand, I will also not be asking that the reader seek female empowerment in “her resourcefulness in addition to her role as a woman—the mistress of visible hygiene and ritual cleanliness—and as a mother … [as well as] … from her role as cook and baker, and sometimes from her singing voice as well...” as some liberal feminist scholars have (Gelbart 2012:27). Similar voices have even suggested that Roma beauty contests held at the end of the 90s brought “women more squarely into the public realm” (Silverman 2012:121). In sharp contradistinction to these voices, I maintain alongside Federici that gender hierarchy is the result of class struggle; female autonomy is reduced and constrained through domestic labor discipline and invisibility, a process that I will argue directly feeds the super exploitation of informal Roma labor within the general labor force of Belgrade. The realms of beauty and domesticity are ghettos; this is as true the in slum as it is in the green suburbs where I usually lived. Linda's own neighbor, Avdula, for instance, wasn't even allowed to leave the house to go shopping without a male escort until quite recently. She was beaten when it was discovered she had secret plans to marry a collective member of Koko Lepo for his passport, unbeknownst to him, and escape to Germany. Avdula's experiences as an abused and exploited house-worker exposes a qualitative difference in the ways that gypsy women experience patriarchy, as well as the varied limitations or opportunities to respond to it. They do not, however, suggest an endemic cultural basis to this exploitation that requires a morally relativistic understanding under the auspices of tolerance and diversity any more than they do stereotyping and racist moral exclusion.

As grim as Avdula's situtation is, female autonomy is not entirely lost in the settlement. In an attempt in October, 2015 to join the older children of the *naselje* with those of the *mahala* for a shared activity, several of the *naselje* girls had declared that if *mahala* kids went, they wouldn't come. After meeting with the parents of the *mahala* and getting a sense of which kids would be joining the program that evening, I followed teacher Anastasija back to settlement to plead with the girls to give the *mahala* kids a chance. We confronted Elmedina (12), Srđana (13), and Elma (12) on the settlement border waiting pensively for our return. Anastasija shared the news that a considerable number of kids from the *mahala* would be joining us and the girls immediately broke into a heated discussion. They asked questions about the age, gender, and physical size of the *mahala* newcomers until finally deciding that they would indeed come, but that Anastasija and I had to consult Elmedina's grandmother and Elma's mother to get permission. Elmedina's grandmother carries a formidable voice in the settlement, a fact felt acutely by the collective members of Koko Lepo. I myself have been sternly reprimanded by her on several occasions.

They asked Anastasija to lie for them and tell their guardians that it was only *naselje* children on the trip. We refused and she instead steeled herself to make an honest case to Elmedina's imposing grandmother, who responded with a wealth of concerns about the safety of her granddaughter. “There are wicked people here,” she explained, expressing concern not only about the kids from the *mahala* but the settlement as well. She centralized Ibn's circle as particularly dangerous and recounted a recent spat she had with them. One of Ibn's children had been harassing her daughter-in-law and she went down to his house to confront him directly. The patriarch was accompanied by one of his older children whom the grandmother described as “mad as a snake”. The grandmother demanded that Ibn keep his kids in line unless he wanted “to start the third world war.” Anastasija assured her that none of Ibn's kids were coming on the trip and she finally consented saying, “I would trust you to take Elmedina to Kosovo and back, but she is your responsibility”. Here we catch a glimpse of a female authoritative agency confronting the very power center of the *naselje*. Moreover, permission to join the trip came not from male authority, at least not directly, but from female. I take this as evidence that the patriarchal political economy, as holistic as it is, cannot be seen as absolute.

Linda gave permission to take Elma along as well, and down the path we went to the main road. On the way, Elmedina spoke fondly of her late grandfather, saying that he never beat them and was good to his wife. Then, apropos of nothing in particular, she quoted him, “A woman can only have one man, but a man can have a thousand women”. This is not the first time I have heard something like this in the settlement. The fidelity of married women and the promiscuity of men has long been a subject of discussion between our collective and the *Deponija* residents. Typically this discussion begins in the form that Elmedina adopted on our walk to the bus stop: a lecture. For instance, when rumors started to spread about *naselje* resident Jelena's extramarital affair with a young neighbor, Linda came to the squat to gossip. She decried Jelena's actions, knowing full well the resentment and fear Jelena feels about her husband to whom she married at a very young age. Collective member Sanja tried pressing this point, but Linda dismissed her outsider arguments outright. “You don't understand,” she started, “We aren't like you; a man can sleep around but a woman should stay faithful to her husband.” Again we witness the relativizing of gender identity in the settlement along insider-outsider lines. Tellingly, Tanja, a more liberally-minded member of Koko Lepo, responded with an affirmation of this sentiment, telling her that it was like this for her own people as well, meaning Serbs, much to the dismay and consternation of the anarchist Sanja who wanted to naturalize neither the cultural divide between Serbs and gypsies through Linda’s affirmations of difference nor the gender divide between freedom and unfreedom through Tanja’s affirmations of similarity.

According to the existing research, Linda’s position is not unique in ‘Balkan Roma’ communities; the promiscuity of men is generally assumed and social accepted whereas female sexuality is intensely restricted (Acton and Bosnjak 2013:659). I will not permit a culturalist explanation to suffice for this phenomenon here and offer instead an ideological interrogation. In the introduction of this dissertation, I argued that socially necessary labor time may be extended in special economic zones established by race. In these zones, lives may be devalued by devaluing time itself, softening the impact exploitative labor practices have on what is seen as a social necessity. I see no reason to confine this principle to race and I contend that the demarcation of an un-free gender is a technique of Control, one which would not likely survive, given the clear agentive tendencies of the women of *Deponija*, without a the distinct material foundation of naturalized super-exploitative domestic labor tied, as it is, to a racialized system of capital accumulation. Linda’s claim that the women of *Deponija* are unlike the Serbian women of Belgrade should do more than simply affirm a cultural distinction, but must also be read as a political economic distinction that elucidates the class constitution of the division of labor within the “reconversion of the excretion of production”, as Marx writes in the third volume of Capital (V.). Linda and Elmedina offered the female members of the Koko Lepo collective a direct view of the prevailing ideology of the *naselje*, who then, in turn, offered it to me. These cultural elements of gendered ghettoization so optimistically relativized by the liberal Roma feminists cited above are ideological in the Althussurian sense as they are imagined as immutably real, produce concrete practices, and allow the carrier of the ideology to be seen as a subject within it while willfully reproducing its naturalization anyway. Linda sees that other modes of imagining sexuality are possible, yet this fact merely obviates the reality of *Deponija*'s own social construction of sexuality.

The ideological discipline exerted over the female body in the settlement is often punitive, regardless of the female subject having engaged in any act at all. When founding member of the Koko Lepo collective, Gricko, allegedly sexually assaulted one of the parents in the settlement, he was ostracized by the residents of *Deponija*, but only briefly. His victim suffered the worst of it for having received the sexual attention of another man. She was labeled *kurva*, “whore”, much in line with Okely's findings on the common consequences of Gorgio male contact with gypsy women, and the children in our kindergarten reproduced this in class. Her children stopped coming to the kindergarten for almost a year and she rarely left her house except for groceries. We were no longer welcome in her home. This was the cost she paid for speaking out against her attacker, who himself was expelled from Inex and, as a derivative, Belgrade itself.

Let us now return to that overcast day in October with a full appreciation of both the political-economic and disciplinary gravity of gender relations in *Deponija* in mind. The subject of discussion between Elmedina, Elma, and Anastasija as we walked down the winding muddy path was light, yet steeped in concerns of gender and power. Anastasija responded to Elmedina's decree about male and female sexual behavior by saying that a woman doesn't have to have only one man:

> *“You can like as many people as you want,” she continued, “and whoever you want!”.*
>
> *Elmedina retorted incredulously, “So, what, are you saying that if i like a girl i should have a girlfriend?”*
>
> *“Yes, of course.”*
>
> *She dismissed Anastasija with a “Pff...” and said simply, “No, I can't.”*
>
> *Elmedina concluded the conversation with a sweeping summary, “No, no... one girl, one boy forever. Guys treat women like shit, they're like that, they change them one after the other.”*

Anastasija had discussed sexuality and gender with the older girls before. Elmedina's age-mate Valerija (13) had asked Anastasija (20) if she had a husband or was at least engaged:

> To which I responded “God no, I'm way to young to think about marriage like that” (I thought I shouldn't push it and say never) she then says, “Yea I'm too young too,” and I freak out saying how she shouldn't think about it for a long long time, and shes like, “Well, a

> couple of years and I'll probably be engaged”, so I ask if she would like that, if there's a guy she likes or a boyfriend and shes like, “Oh, no if you ask me I would never get married, I'm not interested in boys and relationships but its not how it works here, my dad will find someone for me and I will have to get married and I'll do it... so is it true that you can choose who your boyfriend is?” and I say “Yes, and you can change them and have more of them,” and she says, “Oh, it must be really nice to be able to choose on your own, my dad decides everything, even my hairstyle, it has to be long so that someone will like me.”

Despite her concerns, however, only six months later, Valerija will have had eloped with a young man from Kosovo against the wishes of her parents. Elma, glowing with pride after having attended her wedding, would report that she is blissfully happy in her new home with her husband's family at 14 years of age. The moral and ethical implications of this are, of course, legion. However, at the very least, by identifying the self-constituted agency of our young friend as well as that of Elma in her open support of Valerija despite its denial of patriarchal household authority, we might tenatively point to some of the limits of the patriarchal grip. I must cautiously support, then, the call of Sherry Ortner (2016) to move away from the 'dark' anthropology of structural violence and victimhood into an anthropology of creative agency and positive movement, with the substantial caveat that all such action only finds value in the very real darkness of that lived violence. A class-struggle view of Valerija's escape must be tempered by the acknowledgment that the immediate transition from daughter to wife might not portend a revolutionary agency, but neither can we dismiss the rebellion as merely reproductive of her conditions of exploitation as a domestic worker. Agencies of rupture are never complete, but anthropology can make them visible and value them against the structural weight that such agents push against. What might it mean that Valerija chose her own husband? That she enters into a new domestic contract under at least one condition of her choosing? How might we acknowledge her agency without forgetting the moral problematic posed by the fact that this rebellion took the form of a “child marriage”?

Acton and Bosnjak (2013) attempt the most ethnologically complete explanation to date of the practice of marrying young among the Chergashe Roma of Bosnia and Serbia. They offer several cultural hypotheses yet shy from materialist suggestions that might allow us to situate the practice in the contemporary political economy of the post-socialist Balkans. The first relates to the particularity of the Chergashe as descendants of slaves in pre-emancipation Romania where marriage might have been a deterrent against unwanted attention from slave masters. Furthermore, the traditional bride price, the *dar*, paid by the grooms family as compensation to the bride's is largely contingent on the bride's virginity, hence putting an added premium on her youth. A second explanation, similar in many respects to the previous, is based on the tendentious assumption that Roma culture in general is presumed to share a common ancestor with Punjabi culture in general. Again, emphasis is placed on the dowry and social control over young female bodies, though this explanation is easily the weakest; to wit, much of Okely's career has been spent dispelling the primordialist notions attached to the Indian origin myth. However, Acton and Bosnjak's third, and to my mind only salient contribution is their focus on the relation between marrying young and the proximity to the hegemonic culture surrounding them. This explanation undermines the creeping primordialism of the others while providing a relational basis for understanding the practice. Much like Okely's understanding of the relationality of Gypsy/Gorgio sexuality and Graeber's arguments on commodification and prostitution outlined above, young marriage is here viewed as a protective measure against the brutal and dehumanizing forces of the 'outside world'. I suggest that we might cautiously give Valerija the same interpretive deference in her ‘claiming’ of these processes for her own designs. If Acton and Bosnjak's relational assertions about child marriage hold water, the practice can then be seen in terms of a cultural 'repertoir of resistance' that Valerija could have called upon herself, replacing the relational hierarchy of gypsy 'culture' versus hegemonic culture with that of daughter/domestic worker versus patriarch. As long as we can maintain a mobile, anthropological handle on class struggle as a heuristic notion, otherwise hidden acts of rupture might be brought to light. Agency is found precisely in these cracks and moments of escape.

Returning for the last time to that October excursion later in the day, Elmedina would find herself in conflict with, as she predicted, some of the girls from the *mahala*. Noticing that some of the boys from the *mahala* liked Elmedina, one of the new girls confronted her, verbally and physically harassing her for “showing off”. Elmedina, exasperated and indignant, recounted the incident to Anastasija adding, “I didn't come here to show off; I was nice! I'm not pretty for anybody I'm pretty for myself!”. Such overt displays of feministic autonomy, at least as we outsiders can see it, is yet something of a rarity and confined, apparently, to the adolescents of the settlement, often in conflict with their own mothers. For example, Elma, a year prior, declared that she had no interest in being a wife as her mother has planned, and instead resolved to be a teacher like the women in the collective. These displays are more easily discernible to us in the Koko Lepo collective, particularly its female members, because they are formulated in part from the experiences these girls share with us. Feminist ethnography must do more than simply catalog such expressions, it must also find and bring to light the buried feminisms behind the curtain of 'mutual misrecognition' that separates the collective from the settlement and simultaneously permits and limits such sharing in the first place (ex: Abu-Lughod 1998).

To summarize, the gender and power dynamic in the slum indeed creates a hyper-exploited laboring subject out of women, but let us avoid falling into the traps set for us by a long history of patriarchal orientalism. As Lila Abu-Lughod warns, “to launch feminist critiques in a context of continuing Western hegemony is to risk playing into the hands of Orientalist discourse” (2001:107). The fact is, exoticizing the gypsy female Other helps to establish, not merely the cultural prejudice called “gypsy”, but the invisible racism of the civilized “We”. “Non-Gypsies transfer to her their own suppressed desires and unvoiced fears,” writes Okely (1996:57). The control over women's bodies is not restricted to the settlement or necessarily endemic to gypsy culture; but the Roma of *Deponija* live in the same world of patriarchal exploitation as do the six female Russian astronauts who embarked on their first training mission while I was writing this very section and were asked how they would “cope without men and make-up”. The patriarchy is as alive in *Deponija* as it is in orbit. What we gain from creating racialized gendered scapegoats is a sacrificial offering that can absorb the structural sins of the world, exactly as I have argued with the problematique of race. In this spirit, Abu-Lughod faults colonial feminism for exposing gender injustice in the Middle East only to reproduce the global conditions for that very injustice through war and sanctions (2014). The immense downward pressure on female domestic labor, structural deprivation, and lack of access to 'human capital' like education and mobility has doubly commodified the Roma female body *within* the dynamic class constitution of accumulation in capitalist Belgrade. Virginity is a “token of value”, in Marx's words (referenced in Graeber 2001:67), of labor discipline in the girl just as it is one of honor and order in the father who is robbed of honor in the city proper. The logic of the cottage industry, the domestic site of the original destruction of gendered commons in Federici's historical reading, forces a double proletarianization on the girl child as a worker who has nothing to sell but her labor and as a commodity herself which can be valued and passed on to others. Placing culture as the generator and sole judge of the social condition of women in the settlement without seeking the class-struggle at its heart nor the dual exploitation suffered by the same struggle as it is necessitated by a racist Control apparatus can do nothing to ameliorate such conditions, only hide the bases of their reproduction.

[II/C] Control and the ‘gypsy race’

The economic, historical, and cultural processes by which the ‘gypsy’ is constructed as a policed subject of global capitalism

The Purity of the Ideal and the Danger of *Deponija*: “Where there is dirt, there is a system”

Exhibit A: To pay the rent, I taught sometimes as an English teacher in the neighborhood of Banovo Brdo. After my last class one day, I was headed down the stairs when I overheard the end of another class still in session; the topic happened to be Gypsy informal collectors. “We let them into our communities because they provide a service," a student was heard to say, “but we keep them at bay to protect our communities." The class was in vocal agreement.

Exhibit B: When social housing for evicted Roma residents of an informal settlement that was to be built on the outskirts of the Zemun neighborhood in Belgrade, residents vehemently protested. They claimed it was not a racist protest, merely a sensible objection to the health risk posed by the possibility of gypsies entering their neighborhood. Citing a prevalence of scabies in parts of that particular settlement, they filled their placards with violent phrases such as, “Get out, mangy Gypsy!" The housing project was indefinitely postponed.

Exhibit C: Early in her tenure with the Koko Lepo collective, Anastasija would return home to find her mother waiting for her with a large black trash bag. Her mother would demand that she strip and deposit all of her clothes into that trash bag so that the clothes might be washed separately from the rest of the family's laundry. The settlement, in her mind, was a “lair of disease" and thus every item of clothing that Anastasija wore to the settlement was potentially contaminated with any number of vague or imaginary microorganisms.

Exhibit D: The nicer areas of Belgrade are equipped with a special kind of public trash container. This container does not sit above ground as most do, but is underground and covered with a smallmouthed metal receptacle. This container is designed to prevent trash pickers from making a mess of the street. Roma collectors, at least in theory, cannot easily access the recyclables that such containers hold, and are forced to travel to other areas where more traditional containers still reign. These underground containers are surrounded by garbage, as the relatively small metal receptacles are inevitably overflowing with the consumer waste which constantly pours from each and every tree-lined block.

Mary Douglas is no stranger in the annals of Gypsy studies in the social sciences. She is the gray eminence behind symbolically rich analyses dictating the internal logic of the Roma social order by germinal writers like Acton, Stewart, and Okely. Her work has also been invoked as a way to account for the marginalization of Gypsy and traveler groups by the dominant culture. Her utility in these endeavors is clear, yet Mary Douglas' work on purity and danger has a political economic impact of Gypsy informality as well, specifically its simultaneous character of being both visible and invisible as an urban location. In order to understand the organizational power of the purity and danger dialectic on the historical formation of *Deponija* and its ongoing reproduction in the contemporary period, we must find the common thread of self-denial at the heart of what is supposed to be a pair of naturally opposed political-economic systems on the national level: the 'state socialist' model of Tito and Edvard Kardelj, and the liberal market approach in the era of Zoran Djindjić and beyond, but truly characterized, I will argue, by a century long process of police rationalization and the establishment of a Serbian Belgrade. Here I utilize the "holistic agency of the state" heuristic argued for in the introduction of this dissertation and position the Belgrade 'gyspy' as a political subject in this historical process. Swiss-German criminology, pro-European elites, gendarmes, white power groups, and cults of personality all coalesce into a positive 'Serbian' citizen against whom 'the gypsy' is constructed its its negative image. In order to stitch together this narrative tapestry, I will first need to thread our needle with political economy, specifically a materialist conception of the 'gypsy' as a *race* based on Marx's central arguments about socially necessary labor time. From here, the machinations of the State can be examined as an indelible part of creating a racialized laboring subject by naturalizing, thus devaluing, *ciganksa posla* – “gypsy work”.

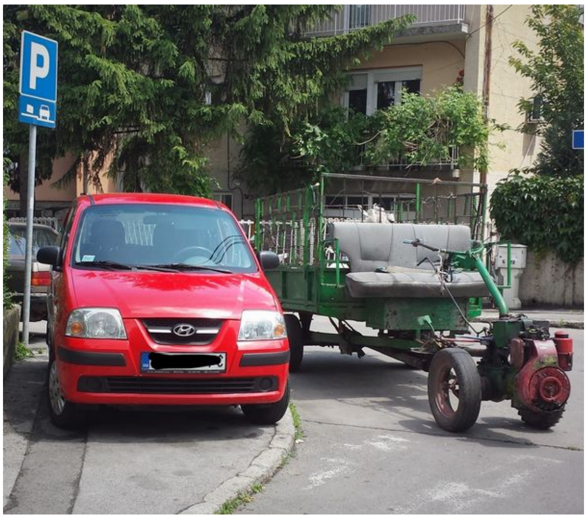
Illustration 11: A self-made collecting tractor in Čukarica

Racializing Capital through ghettoization: beyond divide and conquer

The devaluation of gypsy labor as well as the naturalization of that labor takes place in what Marx refers to as the “economy of constant capital”, and for our collectors, specifically in the “reconversion of the excretions of production” (*Capital* III, Chap. 5/IV). The key to understanding the racialization of this labor in capitalism is in Marx's conception of socially necessary labor time.

Though indubitably true, it is not enough to say, with Theodor W. Allen and Noel Ignatiev, that racism's function in capitalism is to divide the proletariat and prevent the realization of a class-for-itself. To be sure, solidarity *is* one of the victims of the racialization of labor, but the divide and conquer narrative can only take us so far; racism has definitive material consequences for capitalism.

Socially necessary labor time, according to Marx, is the source of value in capitalism. While David Graeber and, more recently, David Harvey are keen to point out that value can come from a variety of sources, including “prestige”, let us focus for the moment on Marx's reasoning. The commodification of labor power provided the capitalist with a unique source of capital, one that could be stretched and combined in ways to produce value in a commodity beyond both use and exchange (*Capital* I, Chap. 6). By harnessing this power and stretching it over the rack of fixed capital expenditures in the means of production, a great combination of workers could produce exponentially more surplus value which, when capitalized on, allow and demand the expansion of capitalism itself (*Capital* III, Chap. 5/IV).

The problem with labor is that one cannot value it the same way one might value aluminum or machinery since labor comes from living human beings which themselves come from society. If you pay too little for labor, the person attached to that labor will not be able to afford to continue reproducing that power to work and if you pay too much for it on average, you limit or even eliminate your ability to extract surplus value from it. Labor's value for the capitalist is determined by the socially necessary labor time for the production of commodities as well as for the reproduction of the laborer. This is why Marx referred to it as variable capital (*Capital* I, Chap. 6).

It stands to reason that the fewer variables a capitalist has to deal with, the more securely he can establish the rate of surplus value in his production system as well as the rate of profit when that rate is compared against the total mass of advanced capital. We can see then, what kind of a problem labor's volatility poses to capital. One solution is to convert as much of these variable qualities into constants whenever possible. Silvia Federici has gone through great lengths to show how the gendering of domestic labor helped to lower the cost of reproduction of male laborers in the early days of capitalism in *Caliban and the Witch* as well as in the contemporary period with *Wages for Housework*. She identifies the establishment of capitalist patriarchy as one of the original class struggles and shows how ideology and the relations of production are inextricably linked in the capitalist world. My own analysis dovetails neatly with Federici; I argue that the racialization of discrete “lines of industry” in Marx's terminology, more specifically to that which “supplies the means of production” socially subsidizes the cost of fixed capital, thus increasing the rate of exploitation of labor in other lines of industry. Moreover, within the racialized line itself, the fact of racism expands the socially necessary labor time of the production process by devaluing said time and thereby allowing for more of it with no affect on the price of the commodity produced. Put in another way, racism devalues labor by devaluing the time of the laborer itself by entering that laborer into a discrete field of temporal value.

A slum-dwelling gypsy in Belgrade is expected to live a shorter life, spend less time in school, establish much shallower roots to a place, and, in the popular imagination, offer very little to the total value of 'Serbian' society while at worst actively sap from it. In short, none of the criteria by which a *beograđanin* would value their own time would appear to apply to the slum-dwelling gypsy. Whereas a *beograđanin*, with a longer average life-span, devotes a much shorter percentage of that life to labor due to the fact that he or she will not start work until at least after high-school or even after university and then in old age can enjoy retirement, my young friends in the Dump begin their working life at about five years of age and continue until they die. Taken in total, the amount of time devoted to capitalist labor in the socially average gypsy collector's life far outweighs that of our socially average *beograđanin*. The socially necessary labor time needed to extract surplus value from the line of industry responsible for the means of production in other lines is vastly expanded through this racist ghettoization. The fact that the same prices for recyclable waste rule for the gypsy collector as for the Serbian collector, yet collection has been almost entirely racialized as *ciganska posla*, or “gypsy work”, indicates how effective racism has been on the valuation of a certain section of the Belgrade labor pool. This price *is worth their time* in the case of the gypsy collector, but the time of the *beograđanin* is apparently too valuable for such work despite the twenty-percent unemployment that plagues the country.

Racism then, expanding the socially necessary labor time in one line of industry, has concrete effects on the total global system:

> What the capitalist thus utilises are the advantages of the entire system of the social division of labour. It is the development of the productive power of labour in its exterior department, in that department which supplies it with means of production, whereby the value of the constant capital employed by the capitalist is relatively lowered and consequently the rate of profit is raised. (Capital III, Chap. 5).

Anti-*ciganizam* in Belgrade is part of the same collection of powers that assembles commodities in Shenzhen and forecloses on homes in Detroit. Regardless of whether or not what is collected in *Deponija* specifically ends up in Chinese 'special economic zones', the racialized division of labor in Belgrade, itself aggravated by the global division of labor, is a prime determinant in the value of reconverted “excretions of production”. By lowering the necessary expenditure of the materials of production, racism in this way “increases *pro tanto* the rate of profit” in capitalism writ large (Capital III, Chap. 5/I). This underwriting by racism of productive materials further subsidizes the rate of surplus value in the Chinese industries which are the largest single customer base of recycled materials worldwide. The commodities produced there are heavily reliant on the buying power of consumer economies, especially the United States, where the paradox of stagnant wages and diminishing production in the world center for consumption was solved by the expansion of consumer credit leading to the infamous housing crises of the last decade. In an effort to expand the lost base, consumer credit initiatives had spread back to Belgrade where individual consumption choices contribute to a tighter positive feedback loop between Serbian identity and a particular position in the neoliberal city. Expanded buying power means more recyclables, more recyclables means greater visibility of collectors, greater visibility requires greater sublimation under identity categories; the flat circle continues.

Macroeconomic contributions to Deponija's political economy

The cottage industry of informal waste picking in Deponija, which weighs so heavily on the girls of Koko Lepo, is part and parcel of world capitalism and cannot be understood in isolation. Without creating a completely deterministic narrative, it is possible to hypothesize numerous macroeconomic explanations which can account, at least partially, for the social dynamics of the settlement. In keeping with the political economic analysis outlined above, it should be possible to connect the divisions and antagonisms in the settlement to particular macroeconomic trends which should provide an integrated image of the settlements to the world economy. While there are limits to this view of the social constitution of the settlement, these hypotheses ought to suffice to provide at least the basis for a real connection to the construction of identities and divisions within the settlement in a way that avoids creating too artificial a boundary between the settlement and the world it must endure. Besides the political economic implications of the NGO-ization of the state as outlined above, it should be possible to expand upon the aforementioned cottage industry characteristics in the settlement by linking them to the simultaneously 'national' and 'international' processes of liberalization and their effects on the Serbian economy.

There appears to be a certain cognitive dissonance in the analyses and recommendations of international agencies such as the World Bank. While lauding the liberalization of trade, especially the reduction of tariffs in Serbia's economic policy, the World Bank simultaneously bemoans the continuing dominance of imports in that same economy[30]. Of course, with nothing standing in the way of imports dominating local consumer markets, Serbia can do little more but stretch their export economy as far as it can go in a frantic, and probably futile, attempt to balance the deficit of trade

At the same time, the World Bank has made specific recommendations for the normalization of informal laborers in Serbia, particularly Roma workers, arguing that their informality has a strong negative effect on economic productivity[31]. There are, however, other explanations for why the racist maintenance of Roma informality, particularly in the waste sector, might have direct connections to the very policies that the World Bank its institutional ilk have been recommending for the last few decades.

The purpose of an 'import-oriented economy' is to increase the purchasing power of an economy's consumer population, be they individuals or, importantly, entire industries. Concerning the latter, the piecework inherent in informal waste collection bolsters industrial profits by drastically reducing labor costs. It was estimated in 2008 that forty percent of the total collection labor in the Balkans was performed by informal Roma workers (Medina 2008), while other researchers claim that informal non-waged Roma labor is the dominant supplier of recyclable materials to these industries[32]. Without a rather substantial portion of waged labor, variable capital expenditures can be slashed. "But shouldn't this mean," the World Bank would argue, "that the consumer participation of this army of collectors is reduced?" Enter informality; informality of labor and informality of housing go hand in hand in the world of the 'gypsy' collector. With significantly less housing costs, and a substantial reduction in other costs of reproduction due in part to a reduction in bills as well as the super exploitation of women and children in this line of industry, informal 'gypsy' collectors are able to become viable consumers despite their lack of wage labor. This condition thus expands the profit margins of a weighty part of the recycling export sector in Serbia, the trade in metals, without eliminating the consumer power of its central labor force.

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[30] World Bank, Republic of Serbia Country Economic Memorandum: The Road to Prosperity: Productivity and Exports. Volume 1 of 2: Overview. Report No. 65845-YF. December 6, 2011

[31] World Bank. World Bank -Europe and Central Asia: Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion. April, 2010.

Apart from metals, other low value-added exports, acquired in no small part from informal collecting labor, shape the Serbian economy. Umka, Serbia's single most important paper mill, estimates only 30% of its production is consumed locally while the remaining 70% is exported[33]. Were it not for the informality of Roma collecting labor, these companies would likely be the largest employers in the country. The exact amount of money saved by these companies through the reduction of wage labor is not known. However, with more than 3.5% of the Roma of Serbia living in informal settlements (Vuksanovic-Macura 2012) and upwards of seventy percent of the Roma population engaged in informal waste picking[34], it is not hard to fathom the potential savings of this racialized system of piecework.

An added bonus of such informality is the reduction of state spending on this persistent social problem. Despite the World Bank's claims that the investment needed to fix the informality of Roma labor in Serbia is less than its productive potential to the GDP, the dominant mood among such international economic organizations is not one that favors social spending, but rather radical cuts. Policy paper after policy paper, when geared towards foreign direct investment, universally call for cuts to public spending[35]. Given the complete hegemony of neoliberal governance in Serbia at a time when entire city blocks have been privatized and leased to foreign developers[36], what possible incentive can exist for the state or its municipal incarnations to engage in such a massive social project?

Finally, the disorderly paradox of Serbia’s import-dominated/export-oriented economy reproduces its own conditions for the continuation of this line of industry within its borders merely by participation. 50,000 tons of packaging waste are produced annually in Serbia, and the meager two percent of that which is collected amounts to 350 million euro-worth of salable products for both local consumption and export[37]. Dumping is minimally regulated in Serbia, meaning that the vast majority of waste, when not protected by public containers, is amassed in informal dumping

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[32] Nesic, Jelena. New partnerships for Socio-Economic Inclusion of Informal Collectors in Serbia. TransWaste Final Conference “Less Waste, More Resources”. Budapest, September 2012

[33] USAID. *Secondary Materials and Waste Recycling Commercialization in Serbia, 2009-2010.* Page 20. February 2010.

[34] Praxis. *Analysis of the main problems and obstacles in access of Roma to the rights to work and employment*. June, 2013.

[35] For a recent example: World Bank. Serbia Country Partnership Framework FY16-20. Chair Summary. June 23, 2015.

[36] In reference to the ongoing Belgrade Waterfront project, a vast gentrification initiative by the Dubai-based developer Eagle Hills in which the City of Belgrade has leased over 400 acres of occupied urban space for a 100 year period.

[37] Agencija Tanjug. “U Srbiji 100.000 ljudi sakuplja otpad”. *Glas-Javosti*. February, 2011.

locations both uncontrolled and unseen by the governing apparatus[38]. Taken as a whole, these conditions provide the perfect basis for the infinite reproduction of the informal collecting sector. A combination of efforts to survive the liberalization imposed by the world market and masking itself as an export-oriented industrial policy, compounded by the global division of labor, encourages both the racist ghettoization and continued informality of Roma collectors in Serbia.

So then, how are the divisions and commonalities specific to Deponija reflective of this macro economic farce? First, the NGO-ization of the state blossoms under regimes of liberalization and dispossession providing the material basis for the ascension of people like Ibn to positions of power. Secondly, the lack of any clear incentive to formalize Roma labor in the line of industry of the “excretions of production”, in Marx's words, encourages the creation and expansion of invisible slums built on the piecework cottage industry from which Serbia's prime exports feed. And finally, as the macroeconomic pressures of the liberal survivalist economy of paradox continue to grow and expand into new forms of dispossession, the racialization of those at the heart of one of its key lines of industry deepens to the point where even those families who have been in the settlement since the 1970s must still endure precarity of employment, abysmal health conditions, and a lack of access to the basic necessities of good living that economists cynically referred to as "human capital". Of course, this macroeconomic view is not the sum-total of the political economy of the settlement, but hypothesizing it does allow some pathways by which we might connect the dismal wasteland of the local to the cannibal mechanics of the world system. At the very least, it explains the tenacity of *Deponija* as an unwanted but inevitable ghetto. In order to maintain ‘the gypsy’ as a division of labor itself in the recycling sector, normal restrictions on neighborhood hygiene must be circumvented. You cannot keep piles of garbage in suburban areas, therefore an area must exist where the storgae needs of collectors can be met. Racist informality and ghettoization are endemic to the relations of production in Belgrade’s recycling industry. It is an industry built on trash that must appear clean, yet someone must be blamed…

Not quite the beginning: SFRY's leaky socialism

The task ahead is to show precisely how gypsy lives were created as natural, therefor apolitical, laboring subjects of Control and devalued as such. I have opted against a strictly chronological telling and instead will strive to place historical epochs in relation to one another, showing how elements of the present are the synthetic aftermath of struggles in the past. My choice to begin in the socialist period is a principled one; I am dismayed by the exculpatory pass Tito’s Yugoslavia so often receives in the annals of Roma history. While it is incontrovertible that Roma were treated far more tenderly in many parts of Yugoslavia than in nearly all of Europe, it is no less true it is precisely the culture and politics of this period that laid the groundwork for the violent anti-ciganism of next. In conceptualizing the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), this text is sympathetic to the critique of C.L.R. James of the initial socialist revolution of Tito's Yugoslavia as an already finished Stalinism ([1950] 2013:66) which, in the end, resulted merely in state monopolized capitalism based on, in Jame's words:

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[38] European Comission. Serbia: 2012 Progress Report. Commission Staff Document. Brussels, Oct. 2012.

> [a speeding up] in production, planned organization of cadres to utilize thoroughly the working hours of the proletariat, accumulation of surplus value, domination of new instruments of labor over the proletariat-this is the mode of production in Yugoslavia; and from this is inseparable the one party administrative state and the party of bureaucracy (72).

Despite Edvard Kardelj's probably earnest desire to see “state apparatus...turn into a specialized public service of the self managing society" (quoted in Jović 2009:78), its position in the global economy, its own microcosmic world system of uneven development within Yugoslavia, its Rankovic-era surveillance apparatus, and even its historical tendency towards market liberalization in fact made the State indispensable in almost all aspects of life.

Yugoslavia's “socialism in one country" received hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and many more millions from commerce with the United States immediately following Tito's break with Stalin. They subsequently amassed massive debts to private lenders following the oil crises of the 1970s necessitating, so it was thought, a comprehensive macro-political-economic management system that may have prefigured the neoliberal State itself (Bockman 2013). Furthermore, this system reinforced the nationalistic bases of liberal ideology by producing semi-autonomous national republics in its federated system: states within the state. These republics constituted a microscopic reproduction of the world system at large with the rich and western Slovenia funneling easy tourism money to the southern periphery of struggling Macedonia and the hard-working, ethnically mixed, and poverty-stricken province of Kosovo. In the first half of 1966, an American student enrolled at the legal faculty of the University of Belgrade penned a doctoral dissertation in economics on the exploitation of the Kosovo periphery by the ruling center of Yugoslavia. This paper proved to be a hard-sell to his advisors and caused some political stir. Its author, Fredy Perlman, would go on to become a prolific anarchist writer and vocal critique of Yugoslavia's political apparatus. Eventually, Kosovo's exploitation would be accepted in the terms of Perlman’s critique, though re-branded a “difference in development” by the Communist Party in their pledge to help Kosovo develop towards equality two years later (Jović 2009:114).

The Roma, historically a predominant minority of Kosovo as elsewhere in Yugoslavia, were given ethnic minority status in Edvard Kardelj's 1974 constitution which afforded them certain protections and language rights in the State. Three years prior to its passage, efforts had already been made to combat generalized discrimination against the Roma with several legal measures including the official banning of the term “Gypsy” and its replacement by the term “Rom”[39]. Despite the entirely justifiable claims that Yugoslavia treated its Roma minority much better than other European states, the Roma were identified as one of the only minorities in SFRY along with the Albanians suffering from “inter-ethnic conflict” according to a commission on the nationality question in a 1979 report to Tito (Jovic 2009:187). Nonetheless, in the 1970s, sixty Roma associations were formed focusing on everything from sports to theater to literature and by 1981 the first Roma language radio broadcast, “Listen, Roma!” began its transmission[40]. The previous year saw the first Roma town council members in office as well as the first Serbian Roma minister of parliament in Balkan

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[39] Friedman, Eben. Roma in the Yugoslave Successor States. *ECMI Working Paper #82*. December 2014. 5.

[40] State Policies under Communism. *Factsheets on Roma*. Council of Europe.

history. Within four years, Serbia had 53 elected Roma officials in various provincial councils around the country (Kenrick 2001:406).

Being administratively considered an “ethnic group” and not a “nation” in Yugoslavia meant that policies relating to Yugoslavia's gypsy population were largely left up to the constituent republics to create. While this changed in 1981 with their recognition as a national minority (Kenrick 2010:31), their long tenure as a legal ethnic group meant that they continued to be employed in ways which were somehow 'suited' to Roma life as it was prejudicially conceived. Many of them continued their long traditional occupations as craftsmen while many more became seasonal workers which was thought to suit, but in fact perpetuated, their nomadism[41]. Roma found themselves ghettoized and discarded by Yugoslav socialism even as they were hailed as great musicians and a part of Yugoslav cultural life(Puxon 1976). One in sixty Roma in Belgrade made it to secondary school by 1976 at the height of socialist Yugoslavia[42]. From these contradictions and from the dismal experiences of Roma in other socialist countries came the first World Romani Congress in 1971 which centralized nationhood as its key issue and the all the rights such a status demanded. Again, this was finally granted in Yugoslavia shortly before Tito's death.

At the same time as the Deponija slum was forming in the center of Belgrade, those closest to Tito recall his apparently genuine surprise at incoming reports in the early 80’s suggesting that Kosovar Albanians and Roma do not feel as though they are benefiting from the Yugoslav state (Jović 2009:187). In the same period, investigative work on the subject of the Roma in Skopje cast a shadow of doubt on the often repeated claims that Yugoslavia represented a safe haven for the Balkan Gypsy (Puxon 1976). Meanwhile, the material bases of their oppression and the very real exploitation of the Gypsy under the auspices of cultural sensitivity continued unabated despite having finally been granted nationhood status in at the start of the economic crisis in 1981. Uprooted and hyper-exploited in a collapsing political economic system, the bases of their particular exploitation and precarity were thus sublimated as the 'cultural' characteristic of nomadism; the system remained clean by imbuing the gypsy with its dirt. The materiality of the inequity at the heart of the Yugoslav system became subsumed and devoured by culturalist and nationalist ideologies in the late-socialist period. Unable to see the impure outcome of the Yugoslav political economy, and unable to accept the relational basis of exploitation and deprivation at the base of that system, Yugoslavia produced a Gypsy that was culturally able to absorb the imperfections of Yugoslav socialism, or “state capitalism” as James would have it.

The failure of Kardelj's vision provided a certain heft to the ideology of liberal capitalism after the fires of war had finally subsided the end of the 90s. New calls for democratization and an end to the *ancien régime*, here embodied by the reign of Communist Party leader Slobodan Milosevic, rose in the cities and extended to the countryside until enough momentum was gained to literally burn the old guard out of the parliament building at the start of the new millennium. Former left-communist turned liberal reformer, Zoran Đinđić, picked up the mantle of mass leadership and took the country into an era of rapid liberalization. This transition did not come easy and remains unfinished with

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[41] Sardelic, Julija. Romani Minorities on the Margins of Post-Yugoslav Citizenship Regimes. CITSEE Working Paper. 2013. 8.

[42] *Ibid.*

numerous experiments at privatization and just as many new laws producing confusion and precariousness for millions. In the socialist period, Roma unemployment and marginalization produced a political movement under the banner of national liberation. Having achieved modest victories in the establishment of Romani schools, associations, and an international presence, these new political Roma were immediately singled out by the intense Serb nationalist backlash in Serbia and Kosovo when the market socialist system collapsed (Crowe 1996:231). In the neoliberal era, Đinđić-era privatization burned through state industries and social protections leaving the already marginalized ‘gypsy’ population with even less economic footing. To compound matters, the war had sent between 22,000 to 40,000 Roma refugees into Serbia seeking out new sources of livelihood. The utter inability, or perhaps even disinterest of the newly liberal political system to accommodate the needs of so many at the bottom of the social ladder produced this mutually constituted veil of misconception, explained in Engebrigtsen's Transylvanian work (2009), that persists to this day. Once again, the Roma minority, specifically those bound to informal ghettos, find themselves regularly threatened by such experiments and development projects; they are cornered into interpellating the profanity of the system as subjects of it. The gypsy is sacrificed for the State’s transcendence, but not necessarily alone.

Socialist welfare queens, bootstrap nationalism, and the reinvention of the consumer

I have suggested that many struggles within *Deponija* are not endemic to the slum alone. Susan Woodward’s unparalleled study of unemployment in socialist Yugoslavia (1995b) sheds light on several enduring ‘cultural’ characteristics of *Deponija*, especially regarding gender relations. Woodward accounts for the paradox of high unemployment under Kardelj and the lack of organized worker rebellion by pointing to the unique metrics of proletarianization in SFRY as well as the use of party incentives to pacify the unemployed masses. On the latter point, she argues that Yugoslavia’s paradoxically centralized approach to decentralization in its mission to implement a self-managed society atomized the working class into provincial administrative concerns while still maintaining party control over individual access to career advancement. So, while unemployed workers were disinclined to think beyond their immediate administrative boundaries, they were simultaneously pressured to stay quiet lest they lose their access to party-held positions in the workforce[43]. Furthermore, ‘unemployment’ for Yugoslav socialism was unlike the concept as realized in the capitalist ‘West’; one was not considered fully unemployed unless one had no means at all for reproduction and welfare. The state oversaw an uneven but functioning welfare system while relying on the rural composition of the majority of their working classes to absorb the brunt of the cost of their own reproduction. Thus, workers who held productive land in the country were often let go from their positions in order to make way for urban dwellers who lacked such capacities.

Women were particularly disadvantaged in this system along the same logic as it was assumed that women and young people could rely on their families for support (Woodward 1995b:313). Sexist discriminatory practices met socialist welfare in a self-reproducing cycle of dependency, creating a rough market-socialist equivalent to the American “welfare queen” myth, further marginalizing women in the collective imagination (314). Furthermore, campaigns to increase the participation of women in the workforce explicitly sought-out jobs “for which they were more ‘suited’ – textiles, food processing, heath care, education, and office work” (316). As I’ve said, the idea that the super exploitation of female domestic labor and the systematic denial of her engagement in public society, apparent in so many households in *Deponija*, is a native product of Roma culture is demonstrably false and misleading. In fact, the domestic ghettoization of women in SFRY was part and parcel of the formation of the Yugoslav working class and touched Serb families just as it did Roma ones. In fact, it seems as though at least one predominant prejudice about Roma women, their unwillingness or incompetence towards public labor, had its origins in the public prejudices about women in general during socialism in an effort to make unemployment invisible. Problems of social and economic organization were sublimated through gendered divisions of labor and the naturalization of domestic reproductive work.

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[43] It has been theorized that the Rakovica labor uprising that is credited with cementing Slobodan Milosevic’s position as a populist nationalist occurred precisely because its geographic features encouraged a great deal of mixing between workers from self-managed firms who were able to see themselves as a class, a condition that was largely absent in other parts of Yugoslavia.

Migrant laborers were similarly marginalized in this system, who, as a response, formed ethnically related “urban clubs” and engaged in political activism along those lines to secure more political economic representation in the labor force. The effects of inflation in the 1980s were felt most acutely by migrant urban workers who had little or no connection to productive rural land at home (Woodward 1995a:315). Incidentally, the percentage of non-sedentary Roma currently living unsustainable slums in Serbia today – 3.5% – is comparable to that of Yugoslavia in 1973 – 5% (Barany 2001:129). It is perhaps not surprising, then, considering the native definition of ‘unemployment’, that Yugoslav Roma, especially in Serbia, would have been targeted for land redistribution schemes in which many Roma families became caretakers of small farms (Tanner 2008:170). This policy would be echoed in the contemporary period with the village re-locations of slum dwelling Roma described above, though in the former instance it was entirely voluntary (*Ibid.*). Apart from the more obvious meliorative effects of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia’s engineering, this policy appears to have done little to produce a more politically and economically integrated subject out of the Yugoslav Roma, and perhaps by increasing the invisibility of Roma unemployment by substituting it with productive land, the LCY may have exacerbated the social distance between politically integrated working Serbs and themselves. While Roma who received productive rural plots vanished from the urban world, non-sedentary Roma workers built informal infrastructure in the cracks of socialist Belgrade. *Deponija* grew into settlement precisely in this period of inflation and high unemployment, a time when the political necessity of a manufactured invisibility of unemployment was crucial to the legitimacy of the party.

It is also likely that the emphasis on using educational initiatives to produce Roma elites had negative impact on ‘gypsy’ marginalization as well. Whether or not these efforts could have bore fruit given enough time cannot be known for certain, though like many reforms in the 1970s and 1980s, they contained within them seeds of nationalism, but not class solidarity. In order for SFRY to truly address the Roma issue, it would have had to expose a number of irreconcilable contradictions in ‘market socialism’, especially those implying class formation. Reforms that lead to the creation of Roma language schools were right-headed insomuch as they targeted a very serious deficiency in the State’s account of the Roma condition, but woefully naive in their ambitions. Both Gal Kirn and Susan Woodward emphasize the important role that schooling played in the organization of power relative to state-managed capital (Kirn 2012, Woodward 1995b). What the State failed to admit, however, is the social facts of education in such a system. A Roma-language school in Šutka municipality of Skopje, for instance, could offer their students very little hope of political or social advancement; such schools would have been isolated from those in the central Serbocroatian speaking republics where networks of power and affiliation were truly forged (Sardelić 2016).

Beyond granting language rights to Roma schooling, the Yugoslav State’s educational solution to the ‘gypsy’ problem was about creating a nation that could lift itself up, a sort of ethnonational version of the ‘bootstraps’ theory of social betterment. These reforms were the result of politically active and globally influential Roma activists that founded the First World Romani Congress of 1971, bringing Roma issues to the world stage and eventually ousting the word “gypsy” from public political discourse. What they could not do, however, was dismantle the party basis of class rule in Yugoslavia where real social capital, as well as productive capital, were held ever at arms length from those who were still seen as “gypsies” between the infrastructurally integrated but impoverished sprawl of Shutka and burgeoning informal settlements of Belgrade. Also, it is unclear if the Roma elite that eventually rose from these reforms was an entirely novel strata, or if it represented a renovation of the existing elite that was fully formed, and apparently contemptuous of nomadic ‘gypsies’, by time of the Nazi occupation of Belgrade (Pisarri 2014:85). As of yet, there is no outstanding research on the possible historical class relations of Belgrade Roma elites to the migrant ‘gypsy’ laborers who occupied the shantytowns throughout the city at the time. For now, it is important only to realize that these divisions preceded the education reforms of the 1970s and could easily have been exacerbated by the overlay of an even more favorable political order, one working from ethnonationalist ideological bases.

Beyond the ideological understanding of unemployment, the efforts to sublimate it into gender and ethnonationalism, and the creation of a Roma elite, the struggle of the ‘gypsy’ worker is especially tied to the global economy. When serious attempts at liberalization of the Yugoslav economy began in the mid-60s, the State allowed a loosening of import restrictions and price deregulation in an attempt to attract foreign currency to pay off SFRY’s substantial World Bank loans (Kirn 2012:268). This produced an immediate and dramatic inflationary effect which was coupled by austerity measures under the guidance of the IMF and World Bank (Woodward 1995a). By the 1970s, precarity was already a fact of labor, which reinforced existing ethnic and affinity-based cadres of power and capital. This precarious class rarely rose *for itself*, but more often turned to ‘standard of living’ instead of ‘self-management’ as the dominant metric of self-valuation (Woodward 1995b:20). Thus, the State laid the groundwork for the market socialist ‘consumer’, while a steady inflation and a proliferation of less-regulated private firms contributed to an ever-widening gulf between those who could consume, and those who could not. The LCY favored republics whose consumer power could continue to absorb foreign currency and investments as well as those that had the most apparent tourism potential, Croatia being key among them (Kirn 2012:20). The tourist republics were instrumental in cutting real development funds to the poorer republics of SFRY, republics which happened to contain a larger population of ‘gypsies’ who were among the hardest hit by such austerity and who became increasingly flexible and mobile as a result. As we shall see in the following section, this struggle will only become more dire in the contemporary period of consumerism resurgent and the return of the nationalist state as well as the nationalist citizen.

The transcendence into statehood of the nationalist body

When asked if he thought of himself as “white”, a seventeen-year-old English student of mine began to shake his head in a negative response when suddenly he stopped. “I do,” he said, rethinking his answer, “but only when I talk about gypsies!” The formation of the gypsy as a political and cultural object was intrinsic to the creation of the Serb as a European subject. ‘Whiteness’, that cosmopolitan intersection of authoritarianism and civilizing paternalism, was provided its scaffolding in Germanic police sciences mixing with nationalistic conceptions of the urban. This project was launched in earnest in the mid-to-late 19th century, establishing a ‘gypsy’ as the negative inversion of the civilized Serb, though most people are more familiar with its 1990’s analogue in the image of the militant nationalist. The 90’s weigh heavily on contemporary Serbian culture and political discourse, and the state-supported nationalist violence that played so loud a part on the world’s state had profound repercussions within Belgrade itself.

While Serbia, unlike its Yugoslav neighbors, did not commit to an officially nationalist constitution during the wars in the 90s (Hayden 1996), nationalism nonetheless fomented in the public sphere through the dual creation of nationalist police and their mirror-image in the nationalist mafia and their hooligan base. Ample documentary footage from the period of 1991 to 1994, and again in 1999, shows police in various parts of the disintegrating Yugoslavia taking on the weight of nations as towns became isolated by inimical states. The rebellious Serbian city of Knin, for instance, made national headlines when their police refused to don the uniforms of the newly formed Croatian police force and declared themselves for Serbia (BBC 1995). Likewise, the initial conflicts in Kosovo in '91 that largely spurred Serbian nationalism in Belgrade came from nationalist loyalties in police forces there, conflicts repeated and intensified in the tragic violence of 1999. While Yugoslavia was beginning its rapid descent into war, one of the largest urban protests ever seen in Yugoslavia for press freedom in Belgrade was violently suppressed by police forces supported by nationalist hawks in the Yugoslav National Army (BBC *ibid.*). Here, police and military forces as well as militaristic nationalism blended seamlessly.

Meanwhile, the rise of a glamorous mafia class of violent youngsters loyal to the Serbian Orthodox Church, many of whom were veterans of the civil wars, had redefined the self-image of many *beograđani* in the early 90s. War-criminal, entrepreneur, and celebrity personality 'Arkan', Željko Ražnatović, rose to prominence in this period, having lead a battalion of Belgrade’s Red Star football club *‘Delije’* hooligans into ethnic cleansing operations in Bieljina and Zvornik in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. The moral pressure of the youth gangs surrounding Arkan and his ilk contributed to an image of the Serbian male-in-extreme in Belgrade as racous, ambitious, physically fit, drug-free, and loyal. Gypsies, on the contrary, developed a reputation for being underhanded, bestial in their poverty, drug-addicted, and without faith. Despite the majority of this generation of gangsters meeting bloody ends before the decade's close, even my younger English students today remember infamous gangsters like “Knele” with fondness and listen to Arkan's pop-star widow, ‘Ceca’, with loyal intensity as she continues to release hits. Whereas Tito-era governance had at least a theoretical space for female voices and powers, the nationalism of the early 90s was overwhelmingly masculine, and a threatened masculinity at that (Bracewell 2000). Nationalist male bodies were tasked with the protection of the nation as a whole and the discursive usage of the 'rape' concept grew in political prevalence (ibid.). The common project of establishing Belgrade as a Serbian center of power was thus carried out by the police and criminal hooligan in parallel, despite their performative animosity towards one another. To be a gypsy in this environment meant to be a permanent outsider at best, and a sort of corrupted infiltrator at worst. As Control rationalized once more in the 2000s, the state’s mission of the 19th century to create a truly Serbian urban culture returned in this period with striking parallels.

A brief historical interlude part one: How Belgrade became Serbian

By the time Serbia reached full independence in 1877 as a result of renewed Russian and Turkish fighting, a modern penal code, overseen by Prince Mihailo Obrenovic as far back as 1840, had fully matured (Mirkovic 2013:169). While Prince Obrenovic was deposed and replaced by the Karadjorevic family, his younger cousin, Milos Obrenovic, would eventually become the first King of Serbia under the auspices of the Habsburg state, continuing the process of penal rationalization on the European model (*Ibid.*). By this time, a relatively autonomous civilian police system had existed in Belgrade for seventy-three years and the *žendarmerija* was fully integrated into the state security apparatus, enjoying a popular reputation as the saviors of Belgrade from Turkish reprisals after the Čukur Fountain conflict with the Ottoman gendarmes. This period cemented the identity of the maturing police apparatus as definitively *Serbian* in opposition to the foreign occupiers and of the gendarmes as the defenders of Serbian power, despite the former being based on Germanic models of scientific policing and the latter being a French invention.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the first modern ghettoization of gypsies followed immediately by Belgrade's first gentrification scheme appeared in this period. The “Šićan-mala” settlement cropped up in the outer ramparts of the Turkish fortifications at the start of the 19th century (Cvijanović 2014). By the 1830s, the *mahala* appears in the historical record as a fixed ghetto along the now-buried Bibija's Stream, named after the central mystical figure of gypsy mythology. In 1870, as Serbs were replacing Turks as the dominant ethnic group in the central neighborhoods, a large-scale gentrification operation began demolishing the *mahala* and establishing a more cosmopolitan character which remains today as the Skadarlija Bohemian Quarter (*Ibid.*). Bibija's Stream, like the gypsy history of the district, now invisibly haunts the tourist-hub underneath the cobbled stones and elegant restaurants of the quarter[44]. There is no chance that the destruction of Šićan-mala occurred without the direct involvement of the now-fully-matured police apparatus; this marks the beginning of the racialization of policing in Belgrade. This can be deduced counterfactually; as the Belgrade Roma were part of Karadjordje's revolutionary council little more than a half-century earlier, it is unlikely that the gypsies of Belgrade would have been associated with the Turkish occupation despite the presence of a Muslim minority among Belgrade Roma, and so their prejudice cannot be explained away by the general struggle against the Sultanate. Moreover, the sacrifice of the *mahala* in the name of cosmopolitanism in the neighborhood of Dorcol where the settlement was situated, exculpates anti-foreigner sentiments as a possible accessory to the expulsion. The destruction of Šićan-mala took place as an authoritarian continuation of the Belgrade's Europeanization and urban rationalization, hence was a very strong and sure step towards the 'whitening' of Control in Belgrade[45].

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[44] Beograd leži na više od devet reka. Gde se nalaze? *Na Vodi.com.* 24 October, 2014. http://www.navodi.com/2014/10/beograd-lezi-na-vise-od-devet-reka-gde-se-nalaze/

The rationalization of the police system was celebrated some decades later in Belgrade's most important newspaper, *Politika*, as a potential check on gypsy autonomy. Note how seamlessly the call for increased policing of gypsy social relations is woven into casual claims of gypsy parasitism and poor work ethics:

> … after so many centuries of idyllic living [the Roma] have finally gained insight into the fact that it [is] selfish to to be happy thanks to somebody else's work, and that today only one who works for himself is happy. … Taking into consideration the severity of today's policemen, who will no longer be lenient towards the Roma, no longer allowing them to settle their simple misdemeanors with their relatives. Then it is no wonder that even the Roma have started to adapt to the spirit of the times. (*Politika* 1910, quoted in Acković 2008:370)

The article goes on to note that these changes have been encouraged by “leaders” in the Roma communities of Dorcol and Cubara, claiming that these representatives are “carrying the flag of Roma emancipation” (*Ibid.*). They are still naturally predisposed to idleness, but the apparent development of a burgeoning Roma political elite proves what miracles policing can offer to their development.

A brief historical interlude part two: Policing and “political health”

The police truly professionalized at the end of the 19th century with the foundation of school for the education of the *Žendarmerija* not far from the former Sican-mala settlement. This education was radically influenced in 1920 by the introduction of the text *A Contribution toward the Reorganization of the Police* by Swiss criminologist Rodolphe Archibald Reiss (Nalla and Newman 2013) who, along with figures like Hans Gross, built the foundations of scientific criminology from which Yugoslavia’s system arose (Halilovic and Bojanic 2004:373). The work of Reiss, Gross, and their contemporaries was profoundly influential on scientific policing in the European world, which itself proved instrumental in the development of the ‘gypsy’ as a racialized criminal therein (Willems 1997:22). In Belgrade, the rationalization of Control was compounded by draconian laws

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[45] Incidentally, in this same area 125 years later, one of Belgrade's first explicitly white-power groups, the Serbian Blood and Honor Division, beat Dusko Jovanovic, a thirteen-year-old Roma boy, to death (Chabanov 1998). Fourteen years after that on August 11, 2011, twenty Roma were evicted from Skadarska street where the Šićan mahala had been so many years before (Amnesty International 2011). Skadarlija continues to be a well-guarded haven for European tourists to indulge in the Bohemian mythology of the White City. The gypsies there are now securely confined to the socially ghettoized roles that fit the rational order: begging and playing music for the customers. Recent history has taught them that escaping these boundaries invites disaster.

prohibiting “anti-state” demonstrations since 1921 (Nielsen 2009:37). The Public Security Law specifically targeted communists and anarchists but left the concept of “anti-state” open to wild interpretation (*Ibid.*). Aleksander's police-state added a distinctly political dimension to policing by putting it in the service of Yugoslav nationalism at the expense of provincial “tribalism” (35). While undoubtedly brutal, the *Žandarmerija* of the previous regime lacked this specifically political component (37). Under Aleksander, the surveillance “the diverse masses of peasants, merchants, educators, and bureaucrats who together made up the overwhelming majority of the population” (40) was greatly intensified and a culture of denunciation was constructed with the citizen informant as its primary agent of Control (35). Isolated crimes would become symptoms of the “political health” of entire villages (47). The Nazi occupation easily adapted the existing police structure to their rule, as their own shared a remarkably similar genealogy.

Serbia's gypsy population under Milan Nedic, the quisling governor of Nazi-occupied Serbia were enslaved and murdered with impunity. Several hundred gypsy men were shot outright in the early days of the occupation and the entire gypsy population of Serbia was placed under the same special laws as the Jews, themselves essentially wiped out by the occupied State. Control handled nomadic gypsies with considerably more brutality than settled ones with regular employment (Tomesevich 2001:609), but paradoxically under the May 30 laws gypsies were prohibited from holding employment and to this end were denied even ID cards (Pisarri 2014:87). Note that at the very beginning of the occupation a relatively small percentage of the total urban gypsy population was singled out for extermination while the others were folded into the legal apparatus. This is in stark contrast to the cold arithmetic meted out against the Jews and communists whereby 100 of their ranks were executed as retaliation against a single killed German soldier. The answer to this particularity is also embedded in the relation of control to the Serbian Roma. Those executed in the Banjica camp early in the occupation were not selected completely at random. Fifteen of them, for instance, were culled from a partisan-led struggle against the police in the village of Meljak three days prior to their murder. Partisans and local gypsies united against the *žendarmerija* for a day with low casualties, that is, until their rounding up and execution afterwards (Pisarri 2014:95).

It is worth noting as well that these gypsies were interned at the Banjica camp specifically, the primary function of which being the imprisonment of political enemies (Pisarri 2014 96). Let us not forget, as well, that in Europe-proper the Nazi's labeled gypsies as “asocial” in their insidious calculus of internment and extermination. It should also be noted that it was possible, in this period, to be removed from the list of “gypsies” and returned to working status as a Roma in Belgrade. This, along with the use of Banjica instead of the racially-oriented camp at Topovske šupe, suggests some separation between the legal category “gypsy” and a strictly racialist one. This distinction is present in one of the darker moments in Roma history when a group of twenty-some Belgrade Roma wrote a letter pleading the quisling officials to stop equating them with the Jews as the Roma had a special right to live in Belgrade due to their long urban ancestry but at the same time suggesting that the Nazis work actively to expel gypsy beggars and travelers who should not be seen as part of the Roma race (89). This letter marks an earnest attempt, complete with claims to Aryan ancestry, to make the Roma 'White'. It is through pressures like these, Milovan Pisarri argues, that despite failing to exterminate the entire Roma population of Serbia through murder as the police and Nazis did with Belgrades Jewery, they nonetheless resolved “the Gypsy issue” through a combination of brutality and bureaucracy. “The Roma were partly killed,” explains Pisarri, “while the majority of them were administratively 'turned into' Serbs” (160).

Roma were finally brought into the retaliatory execution scheme *en masse* from the 16th of September, 1941 as demand for executable subjects began to outpace the supply of interned Jews (Pisarri 2014: 102). This was intensified through police operations in Jatagan mala, at Čukarica and Žarkovo at the end of October through several nighttime raids and subsequent mass executions (103-105). These raids were aided in a large part by local snitches who took it upon themselves in their off-hours to track fleeing gypsies before the arrival of the police and betray them to the armed officials, conforming, as it were, to the decrees of the quisling state in a manner clearly reflective of Aleksander’s culture of collaboration described above (106). The post-war Commission for Determining the Crimes of Occupiers and their Collaborators found many of the Belgrade *žendarmerija* incontrovertibly responsible in their direct participation in the raids on Roma *mahalas* during the October executions (136).

The political function of the police apparatus, specifically their most militant wing, the *Žandarmerija*, then renamed the Serbian State Guard, was not so different from its role in the now defunct Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Its task remained the centralization of governmental authority through the application of violence in the service of and justified by conceptions of national unity. The “Serbian” character of police control remained paramount to its uninterrupted operations under Nazi occupation and sense of legitimacy just as it had in their defense of the city against the Turkish occupation not yet a century prior. Hence, both Nedic and fascist ideologue Dimitrije Ljotic placed great emphasis on Serbian interests in allying with the occupied force just as the revolutionary leaders of the 19th century did in resisting it. It should come as no surprise then that Milan Acimovic, head of the Commission of Administrators, a small group of Serbian Nazi collaborators that oversaw the invasion and the initial period of occupation, was Belgrade's Chief of Police three years before the Nazis attacked Yugoslavia nor that three years earlier still he successfully petitioned to legalize Ljotic’s *Zbor* as political organization. Acimović also acted briefly as the Minister of the Interior following his stint as police chief, the ministry which oversees the police apparatus in Serbia to this very day (Tomasevich 2001:177).

The socialist period is already addressed in detail elsewhere in this chapter, but I would simply add that the transition into the post-revolutionary government entailed a break in the operations and official existence of the *Žendarmerija*, but proved unable to de-nationalize Control in Serbia. Policing was relegated to the newly formed *Milicija* and the secret services though already by 1966 they had reclaimed their cultural role as the “protector of Serbs” under Aleksander Rankovic’s tutelage and management of Control in Kosovo; Rankovic was expelled from the party that same year. The cult of Rankovic was promoted in from the mid 60s to the mid-70s by Dobrica Colovic’s intellectual circles, claiming that “the peasants are on Rankovic’s side” (Bešlin 2008:53) The close association between the father of the SFRY’s police apparatus and Serbian interests continued after his death in 83’ and well into the 90s where even Serbian high school text books mention the Rankovic “phenomenon” (*Ibid.*) By this time the bases of a future revitalized gendarme were being established in Kosovo as a specifically nationalist project of ultra-violence. Massacres at Ćuška and Račak, allegedly witnessed by independent and human rights watch groups at the time, were carried out in 1999 by the Operational Group (OPG) of the Special Operations Unit (JSO) of the Yugoslav State Security Service (RDB). Goran Radosavljević commanded the OPG in both instances and was later appointed head of the newly reformed *Žendarmerija*, established by Democratic Opposition figure and post-Milosevic Minister of the Interior Dušan Mihajlović in 2001. Two years later, the *Žendarmerija*, with Radosavljevic as commander, was ironically tasked with investigating its own parent organ, the JSO, for its involvement in the gory assassination of Democratic Opposition leader and post-Milosevic prime minister Zoran Djindic. The *Žendarmerija* continues to be the largest single arm of the Serbian police system and is openly nationalist[46].

The police and the *Žendarmerija* played an important role in the eviction and 'resettling' of informal Roma settlements in the 2000s, providing the gaze of violence as well as actual physical force in the destruction of these communities. Such actions gelled firmly with popular sentiments about urban hygiene as manifested in racial terms. Of course, police and gendarmes were also on duty protecting Roma homes from the threat of pogrom in the nearby village of Jabuka in 2010[47]. Let us not mistake this, however, for a political commitment to Roma rights; in the end, their task was still ordering Serbs within the mandated limits of state power. Given the legal impetus, they would be right back in Jabuka finishing what the mob had started.

Hygienic racism and Control in the contemporary period

The nationalism that preceded and followed Yugoslavia's disintegration included a particularly anti-ciganist vein, however its primary targets were those nations that threatened to produce new states. As Roma nationalism and gypsy-ism, generally speaking, do not typically claim statehood, 90s anti-*ciganizam* was subsumed within attacks on the perceived national groups that did. In Kosovo, Albanian nationalists accused them of collaborating with the Serbian state and succeeded in expelling the vast majority of Kosovo's Roma minority. Fleeing Kosovo, they were then, ironically yet predictably, reviled by the native Serbian popular political tides who were simultaneously developing their own white power fringe groups. One such group, known at the time as United Force, beat Roma teen Duško Jovanović to death near his home in the center of Belgrade in 1996, only a few years before the Roma exodus from Kosovo. These young skinheads, connected to the US-based “United White Skinheads” are one of several white power groups in Belgrade who promote openly anti-ciganist attitudes[48]. Despite powerful nationalist figures like Vojislav Šešelj speaking positively about the Roma in his widely-viewed sparring matches in the Hague tribunal, his supporters include a range of explicitly anti-ciganist organizations from Neonazi Skinheads in the late-90s[49] to contemporary groups like Serbian Action. I contend that the growth of white power from nationalism is the profane analogue of the growth of the cosmopolitan city from the nationalized state. Here we witness the maturation of the holistic agency of the state, outlined in the introduction, not as an institution or even a set of institutions, but a total social movement towards a certain kind of Control: hygienic racism. This movement is expressed in local politics and popular

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[46] B92. Gendarmes' new oath focuses heavily on Kosovo. June 29, 2012.

[47] B92. Protests turn to anti-Roma violence. June 15, 2010.

[48] ERRC. Skinhead violence targeting Roma in Yugoslavia. 15 May 1998. http://www.errc.org/article/skinhead-violence-targeting-Roma-in-Yugoslavia/1816

[49] *Nasa Borba*. 'HAJL HITLER' KRAGUJEVACKIH SKINHEDSA: Seselj i Kju-kluks klan”. Ponedeljak, 3. novembar 1997.

sentiments, but it is also part and parcel of a truly international interplay of political trajectories, ideas of ‘Europe’, and the movement of capital.

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WWW. SRB-AKCIJA.ORG

Illustration 12: Graffiti under Brankov most by Srbska Akcija promoting its ties to the Golden Dawn

At the close of 2014, Serbian Action, a neo-nazi group with ties to Golden Dawn, released a public condemnation and call for the extermination of Roma settlements in Belgrade[50]. This call echoed those of a 'popular protest' in the Zemun district of Belgrade one year prior when 200 people took to the streets in response to a scabies outbreak at a nearby school. Despite claims that the protest was purely a public health issue, messages like “We don’t want Gypsies, we don’t want scabies”, “Scabby Gypsies, get out”, “Kill the Gypsies” and “Get out of Zemun polje” were chanted by the agitated mob[51][52]. Thus, anti-*ciganizam* in Belgrade is promoted on two fronts; on the one hand are the openly neo-nazi sentiments of numerous grassroots political groups and on the other are the popular and state-supported conflations of hygiene and racial prejudice. The latter is reflected in State policies of resettlement beginning in 2009 whereby informal Roma neighborhoods are demolished and their residents transferred to shipping-container camps. Rhetorically, these moves are intended to be first steps towards permanent resettlement in social apartments, but underneath this pretense is a strong civilizing discourse that condemns its subjects even as it claims to support them. As urban collectors, restrictions in the shipping container camps against the accumulation of recyclables leaves most families without a source of livelihood beyond the pittances allotted to them by social security payments[53]. In an informal interview, a supporter of Roma equality who had worked in one such camp reported rising alcoholism and a general loss of autonomy and independence in the self-management of families which are themselves subdivided against Roma family practices by such resettling. These measures did not come from the radical right wing of the political spectrum, but from its liberal Democratic Party.

It is precisely this system that must be interrogated anthropologically, and here Mary Douglas becomes indispensable. Among her key contributions to anthropology and to its analysis of symbolic orders is the statement “where there is dirt there is a system" (1966:35). The dialectic of purity and danger demarcates social boundaries. The key anthropological problem with the issue of informal Gypsy settlements in Belgrade however, is that they not only occupy the heart of the society from which they are excluded, but the process of their creation is the same as that which created contemporary Belgrade. Are they part of this society or not? As the aformentioned English student in 'exhibit A' rightfully pointed out, they are simultaneously *in* the community and *held at bay by* that community. Can it not be said that if danger and filth, as a society conceives of it, is in fact internal to that society and reproduced therein, is this not a society which denies itself? Can anthropology account for a culture which contends that it does not itself exist? The culture of capitalism in Belgrade, that set of individualistic dispositions, that brand-name web of significance, that historically particular interconnected assembly of norms of order and political values, hides itself from its own view, masked by race and gender.

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[50] RTS. Leci protiv Roma. 1 December 2014. http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/Dru%C5%A1tvo/1766011/Leci+protiv+Roma.html?tts=yes

[51] Al Jazeera. Protest protiv Roma u beogradu. 6 November, 2013. http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/protest-protiv-Roma-u-beogradu

[52] Civil Rights Defenders. Hate Actions against Roma must be Stopped. 11 november, 2013. https://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/news/hate-actions-against-Roma-must-be-stopped/

[53] Schwab, Eva. “They are hoarding rubbish and burning tyres wherever you put them…”: Displacing and Disciplining Roma Waste Pickers in Belgrade, *LeftEast*. September 26, 2014.

Much as the commodity fetish empties the commodity form of the relations of production, capitalist Belgrade eviscerates its internal mechanics and presents itself to the social actor as a dead thing bereft of the exploitative relations of which it is merely the expression. Yet, the very living embodiment of this relation continues to exist in the form of the Gypsy collector, and she insists on remaining in full view for all to see. Her existence denies this fetishized form of society its claim to disembodied values of 'modernization', 'progress', 'democracy', or perhaps 'tradition', 'hard work', 'morality', etc., and reveals instead an integrated and exploitative hierarchy. André Iteanu, in his writings on the veil controversy in France, identifies this process as the “ideological twist” (2013). The ideological twist:

> ...ensures that the observer who considers that these hierarchies are rooted in political power is a victim of an ideological twist that tends to conceal the fact that these hierarchies are indeed the direct expression of a value. (169)

The value that Iteanu is specifically referring to is that of *laïcité*, the French republican value of secularism, though, as I would argue in the case of gypsy collectors in Belgrade, this value might simply be generalized to “culture” when dealing with the imaginary scale of nations.

Because capitalism in Belgrade must not see itself, it must also misrecognize the evidence of its fragile mortality. Thus, the trash-covered streets are not “the consequences of consumer society", but are instead “the savagery of filthy Gypsies". The callously managed elimination of social protections for the Serbian proletariat is not labeled “the inhumanity of privatization", but is instead seen as “lazy parasitic Gypsies asking for handouts". Edmund Leach wrote that sacrifice existed to allow the “impotent man” of “This World of temporal experience” to bridge the gap into the “Other World of experience reversed”, a world where the impurities and messiness of concrete life are cut away from the purity of the ideal. (1976:82-84). The Gypsy absorbs, as a sacrificial lamb, the sins of capitalism as they are cut away from it. Physically tortured and abandoned to the literal rubbish heaps of progress, the accumulated filth of capitalism is disavowed by its creator and is imbued into the body of the racialized urban collector who is then severed from a hygienic capitalist ideal as a messy impurity. This is Battaile’s transcendent violence, the self-denying violence of becoming pure. The “impotent men”, white proletarians, provocative politicians, industrial innovators, liberal development NGOs, gripping the still-bloodied dagger of nationalism and racism, are hence purified, the social boundary cut into flesh. It is not difficult to find anecdotal evidence of this in press and NGO reportage; a fairly typical example of this might read:

> Mr Besim Čurkoli from the Romani settlement Makiš in the Čukarica neighbourhood of Belgrade alleged that he was, on numerous occasions, verbally abused by police officers. In one such instance, for example, on an unspecified date in mid-summer 2001, a police officer asked Mr Čurkoli for his identification in the Žarkovo area of Belgrade, as the latter was collecting scrap paper. The officer asked Mr Čurkoli what his ethnicity was, and whether he was a “Šiptar”. He continued to add that Mr Čurkoli should be ashamed for making the city dirty, and how Roma made Belgrade dirty. The officer further made verbal threats of physical abuse in case that he would encounter Mr Čurkoli again. (ERRC 2003:28)

Having been cut away, the miserable condition of the Gypsy collector in Belgrade is her own evidence of alien-ness, a foreigner in her own city. For the true citizen to acknowledge her humanity and to take ownership over the excretions of capitalist Belgrade would be nothing less than a wholesale condemnation of one's own way of life. The entirety of capitalism's history in the Balkans has produced the conditions and social organization that is the Deponija settlement, yet the gypsy is blamed for her own deprivation and exploitation. One is tempted to say that the hegemonic cultural imagination of the gypsy affords her a supernatural power accomplish the almost inconceivable act of self-exploitation while still finding the time and energy to threaten the whole of Belgrade with her profanity! As Max Gluckman warns:

> For it is difficult for us to accept that our own society also embodies contradictory principles and processes...We allow room for divergence of opinion, and indeed interest, but within defined limits. If the limits are overstepped, the witch-hunt may begin. It is a witch-hunt so long as persons are blamed for misfortunes that they are not responsible for. (1965:107)

The persistent existence of the gypsy race despite, or perhaps because of, mass persecution is a direct contradiction of the viability of Europe, even when expressed in the microcosm of Belgrade. While this chapter summarizes two generalized political economic regimes in that history, the final section will offer a novel framework to access the investigative potential of “ciganist situations”, moments where ‘gypsy’ is established or reinforced as a potential political subject in a hostile field.

Gypsy identity in Belgrade is the outcome of control techniques in the crucible of class struggle. Here the distinction between 'East' and 'West' proves increasingly outmoded in the face of the developing world system of capitalist relations. In it, we see the development of a variety of 'whiteness', not only in contrast to a “racially erotic counterpoint” as I briefly touched on in the introduction, but primarily through perceptions of governability and hygiene. This should not be taken as a primarily historical text, however, as the historical narrative serves only to establish a continuity of Control over a gypsy subject, an “axis of inequality” upon which the crushing weight capitalist class relations turn. Central to this axis is a devaluation of labor on multiple fronts, particularly though its racialization and engenderment, as well as the development of a social scapegoat who's labor is sacrificed to absolve the sins of capitalist society.

[II/D] *Ciganizam*

A novel framework for an anthropological sensitivity to the political agency of ‘gypsies’ as policed subjects of Control

***Ciganizam*: the dangerous politics of immanent violence**

> *We prefer, without a doubt, a life that disorganizes politics rather than a good politics that manages to organize life. - Colectivo Situaciones (2007:87)*

Ciganizam, 'gypsy-ism', I contend, is a 'situation' wherein integrated yet opposed relation of race meets the cosmopolitan cultural codex of Belgrade in a nihilistic movement against that very order; *ciganizam* is the process of creating a 'gypsy' as a critical agent. I use the term 'situation', in the spirit of *Colectivo Situaciones*, to mean a political encounter that produces a subject “subtracted from the State”. '*Ciganizam'* is an unusual concept in that the movement against it, anti-*ciganizam*, proceeds *ciganizam* itself which cannot properly exist without it. Anti-*ciganizam* is already a critical accusation used to identify, and usually condemn, prejudice against 'gypsy' groups. Those engaging in such prejudice are unlikely to self define as anti-ciganist, this word is almost exclusively used as a condemnation of a particular pattern of prejudice.This word is also unusual; when groups typically used terms like anti-fascist, anti-communists, anti-racist, etc., such words refer in the negative to someone else's self-definition of their beliefs and activities. These terms exist because others have, at least at a certain point in history, referred to themselves as communist or fascist or racialist, etc., but, as I've said, no one calls themselves 'ciganist' even if more general concepts like 'gypsyism' do sometimes appear in scholarship. Where the terms gypsyism, ziganism, or *ciganizam* do exist, I have found them only in literary and cultural studies to describe the moment at which an artistic production creates and reinforces the cultural binary between a gypsy character as an Other and some counterpart representing normal society. In these cases, *ciganizam* is almost indistinguishable from orientalism and thus contains within it the same basis of critique as the term anti-*ciganizam*. My interest, however, is in a very different expression of *ciganizam*, one that offers a novel political agent within and against the total political economic system that has created it. This agency may not always be expressed in political terms, but is ever present in the language of struggle by which my friends in *Deponija* frame their experience.

From my time in the Koko Lepo collective as well as my growing understanding of the constructivist basis of anti-*ciganizam*, I propose a *ciganizam* which is lived, positive, and potentially deeply critical. Advancing existing cultural scholarship surrounding the term, especially in the terms of Belgrade scholar Juija Matejić (2014), I argue that within the binary terms established through moments of *ciganizam* we find a critical wedge by which hegemonic culturalist and civilizational discourses can be overturned and their bases in class struggle exposed in full. This may not conform to the mandates of identity politics and might remain conceptually inaccessible to those working from a perspective of multiculturalism or Roma nationalism. *Ciganizam* confronts anti-*ciganizam* by denying the *situational legitimacy* of its claims: the progressiveness of modernity, the sustainability of capitalism, the nationalist claims of the state, the cultural unity of the Serb or the Roma. It denies, most importantly, the uncontested naturalness of the social order. When seen in this light, *ciganizam* and anarchism exhibit several natural points of bonding though one must not be confused for the other; the former is an affirmative and nihilistic rejection of the terms of oppression born from a reaction to immanent aggression while the latter is an actively developed and evolving political philosophy undertaken as an attack.

There exists in *ciganizam* an avenue for critical agency outside of the traditional fields of anti-racism, anti-fascism, and even anarchism. These traditional modes of speaking about and organizing against racism and its ilk engender long histories, internal debates, and a shared repertoire of activity based on historically developed standards that are not easily accessible to those marginalized by the full brunt of racist oppression. Hidden transcripts of resistance have long been the subject of anthropological inquiry, especially since the advent Marxist anthropology, and I contend it is one of anthropology's principal missions to make intelligible, or at least imaginable, the critical capacities of the subaltern. It shows that in the process of racist victimization at the heart of anti-*ciganizam*, there exists an agitated kernel of rebellion and even nihilistic rejection of "the whole filthy order", invoking the misbehaving spirit of Sergey Nechayev. To put it bluntly, so much time has been devoted to showing that the Roma, who are not “gypsies”, do not steal or trick or take advantage and are fully capable of social integration, that we have collectively ignored a fundamental question, "What's so wrong with stealing, tricking, and taking advantage within an order that has constructed us on precisely those terms?"

Once again, we are approaching incommensurability. The untouchable totems of liberal Belgrade find no protection in the ciganist cosmology. But the ciganist critique is not simply about difference, in fact it problematizes the logical core of that difference; it is about exposing cultural difference as relational iniquity. The social contract at the heart of liberal society is, in fact, a forgery; if the gypsy as understood by anti-ciganism is not her own product but the product of Control, a fact made apparent by the existence of a specifically gypsy agency that exists in direct conflict with Control, then the conditions for this contract on the part of the society that offers it have not been met! Incommensurability between hegemonic assumptions about the workings of society and the actual workings of it as evidenced by the gypsy agent make the signing of the social contract based on civility, law and order, and the protection of property wholly impossible. Indeed, this contract is a criminal hustle on a vast scale.

Before moving into the evidence of this agency, I must make clear that we are not looking at a cohesive political program nor a singular identity. This is not a call for yet another division in the proletariat. My claim is about the power (*potencia*) of *ciganizam* to transform its existing condition into situations of rupture. Let us then invoke Marx here at this critical situation and make his ghost work for us; the white nationalist “...has forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons...”: the *ciganist*, the ‘gypsy’ that talks back to its accuser. Whiteness is also asserted in anti-ciganist moments, it is therefore in these moments that *ciganizam* can obliterate its means of reproduction: the civilized brutality that has such destructive effects on labor value of gypsy collectors. Let us look now to a handful of situations where *ciganizam* managed to pull the rug from under the anti-ciganist interlocutor as well as those in which *ciganizam* was created autonomously as an active rejection of Control whether presented in the image of European-ness and white-ness, or national sovereignty and citizenship.

Deauthorization: anti-ciganism and *ciganizam* in the settlement

Ciganizam's directionality and points of origin are as diverse and contradictory as they are confrontational. Moments of anti-ciganism occur in processes of racialization started by Serbs in Belgrade just as they do by mahala residents inside Deponija. A simple search of the keyword *cigani* into YouTube, for instance, reveals a racist cornucopia of videorecorded instances of what are supposed to be unintelligible practices of people superficially identifiable as gypsy. The hosts of these videos clearly intend the viewer to see humorous reminders of the gulf between themselves and their prefered Other. Such anti-ciganist situations are not confined, of course, to the internet or even the White City, but are just as present in the *Deponija*. When Koko Lepo would propose joint projects or events between the *naselje* in the *mahala*, some residents in the *naselje* opposed this idea because they were not interested in working with "those gypsies down there" whom they saw as dangerous. One day in particular, when rallying children for Koko Lepo event, a resident in an area of Deponija that is not rightly the *naselje* or the *mahala* pointed at a couple of our young girls from *mahala* who, in their excitement about the day's impending activities, were being rowdy. The resident, a recent arrival to Deponija who claimed to be from Montenegro and spoke Albanian as well as Serbian, admonished their behavior, calling them both "*cigani*". The young girls instantly replied with a cavalcade of insults, at first appearing to challenge this epithet, obviously deeply insulted. As the girls turned to step away from the house, they continued to discuss the incident but within seconds had decided, with clear intonations of pride and self affirmation, that they were both indeed gypsies, a fact that they felt was proven by their dark complexions.

The incident is a very telling moment of *ciganizam* in *Deponija* itself. Occurring in a moment of conflict over public behavior, the word "*cigani*" was initially lobbed as a pejorative epithet and was correctly interpreted as an insult by its targets. The answer on the part of the girls, however, was not to deny the applicability of the term *tout court*, but to deny the validity of the voice that offered it. As was revealed in their post dispute discussion, '*cigani'* proved to be an appropriate term between themselves, but an illegitimate critique on the part of their accuser. *Ciganizam*, in this way, is able to undercut anti-ciganist sentiments by denying their authority to create gypsies. In this particular case, the basis was a person, an individual who was judged an inadequate participant in this situation of *ciganizam,* although in other cases with different actors, the law, claims to cultural identity, even civilization as a whole, might be the subject of the delegitimizing gaze offered by critical *ciganizam*.

A recent *Školica* planning meeting with children from *mahala* took us downtown, necessitating yet another public transportation adventure. Upon transferring to the rickety number two, an elderly woman at the front of the trolly began to batter our children with insults. She loudly decried the influence of gypsies on Belgrade, blaming them for, among other things, the election of Aleksander Vučić to the presidency. “They received flats,” she claimed, “and then sold them anyway!” Collective member Jovana attempted to calm the woman in a stern but diplomatic tone to no avail. The children listened in absolute silence as the woman continued to spit her venom upon them. Finally, twelve-year-old Samir could take it no longer and yelled “Shut up, crazy old woman!” Immediately, an middle-aged man sitting in front of him turned to ‘shush’ the incensed Samir, admonishing him. Samir objected, “She’s talking about gypsies!” The man, suddenly appearing sympathetic, replied, “I know, I know, but she’s very old and clearly insane.” This quieted Samir for a moment, but minutes later as we approached the next stop he stood up as the woman did, shouting, “Get off! Get off and shut up!” The middle-aged passenger had nothing more to say. We exited the tram a couple stops later, wondering if we should talk about the incident with the kids, when spontaneously Deki playfully punched his age-mate, Samir, saying “Hey! Vučić supporter! Eh? You like Vučić?” The children laughed and continued ribbing each other, playfully accusing one or another of supporting the SNS party. Samir’s mood lightened and he joined in the game. The children recognized themselves as *cigani* in this woman’s vitriol and this identity proved worth defending by Samir, who interrupted the passive behavioral consensus of the tram by both accepting the title and reversing it from slander to point of pride. The other children also saw themselves in this warped anti-ciganism, yet they playfully co-opted the political absurdity of her racism and exposed it among themselves as the joke it truly was. This is the agentive *ciganizam* that makes its own “gyspy”, but, to borrow from Marx’s *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* “they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past” (1852). On the tram, these circumstances were co-determined by the poisonous rhetoric of the elderly woman and by the acquiescent silence of the passengers, yet these agents were de-authorized in this very task. The strictures within which the children’s *ciganizam* would be established moved from the creative agency of the *beograđanin* passengers and into that of the children themselves.

Unintelligibility: football and churches

I watched our young friends play a game of football with some Serbian children and teens at the Ada Ciganlija recreation island in the Sava river. After several threats against the Serbian players by our bunch, who seemed to change positions, roles, and even rules at whim, 'Team *Cigan*' proved victorious. “We won!” exclaimed Sabrija with fists in the air. “Sure,” I responded incredulously, “but you had something like ten players coming in and out against their five”. Unfazed by the depths of my boundless naivety, he responded, “Who cares? The c*igani* beat the Serbs.” I watched the Serbian boys grumble and pout, no doubt commiserating over the cheating nature of their gypsy opponents. I watched also as our students leaped and hugged each other, swinging their shirts over their heads in total satisfaction with the terms of their victory. I saw *ciganizam* disregard the norms of polite gaming and invert its rules as playful trash-talking became death threats and the basic rules of football, which our students know just as well as any student in Serbia, were tossed aside at a whim with glee like a joke that only the 'gypsies' were in on. The game became unintelligible to their Serb opponents.

There is perhaps no social category in Europe that attracts more oppression and exploition than that of 'gypsy'. No group has suffered the same level of constant horror and poverty, been hunted and mutilated, been pissed on from balconies, chased, bombed, enslaved, a pushed from place to place as have they. Despite this, when *ciganizam* enters a room as an active rejection, the rules change. I, the polite and well-mannered citizen that I am, must cede control of the social situation in that instant and try to keep up. *Ciganizam* is a bomb that explodes on contact with Control society.

Illustration 13: Ritual slaughter of a goat on Đurđevdan, 2015

I believe this is what Stewart and Engebrigtsen are exposing with their curtain of “mutual mis-recognition” in their writings on Roma identity in Transylvania. However, whereas this curtain might be taken for an end in itself, something like a privacy curtain, I argue that it has a more specific function. Rather than simply being a product of a different and insular cultural field, the *ciganist* shroud rejects the terms of intelligibility itself. Mis-recognition is embedded in a dismissal of cultural hegemony. Take for instance a popular Belgrade Roma legend explaining to a presumably Serbian inquirer the absence of a Roma church:

> We had a beautiful church made of white stone. The Gadzovani (non-Roma) had had enough of it, so they bought it off us for a hundred ducats and, on top of that, they gave us their place of worship made of cheese. But one day when the tired and hungry Cigani came to pray after a long day's work, they rushed at it from all sides, and they ate it up until there was not a crumb left to be seen. Had God himself been inside the church made of cheese, the Cigani, what scoundrels they were, God forgive me, would have eaten him all up too. (Ackovic 2008:333)

Here we see a demeaning and nationalistic question, “Where's your Church?” with an absurd answer in which a place of worship is eaten. However, we should not see this simply as a surreal joke, but rather a tool that resets the very terms of intelligibility. The question was never actually “Where is your Church?” but “Why aren't you normal?” The answer, of course, is “We are not your normal because *your* normal has marginalized and impoverished us”. Instead of saying this and entering the conversation on the terms of political rationalism, the terms of the discussion are tossed aside as they are mocked. The cultural argument is exposed as a materialist symptom. Of course the church was eaten, it was made of cheese. Of course the Inex free shop, which we will examine in the next chapter, was ransacked and emptied of its offerings, it was free stuff. *Ciganizam* challenges the very concept of reverence via some sort of materialist vulgarization while nonetheless leaving room for sacred practices among its own. In *Deponija* these practices include the ritual slaughter of goats for *đurđevdan* and *bajram* celebrations, circumcision and marriage ceremonies, and a number of micro-ritual practices surrounding the birth of children or the menstruation taboos. These practices have been well-studied by ethnologists throughout history, yet the framing has usually been to offer such rites as evidence that the Roma have something like a unifying culture that is distinct from the majority population. By contrast, I mention these practices only to emphasize the agency of *ciganizam* as a definitive position. *Ciganizam* is not unintelligible for the sake of it, it is not a celebration of chaos, it is the rejection of a particular claim to legitimacy on the part of Control. The sacred saturates *Deponija*, but there is a reason that most Serbs only see the chaotic alterity of their gypsy neighbors; it is precisely their own claims to transcendence *ciganizam* denies.

Dispelling the State's order: two historical moments

Ciganizam is marked by a nihilistic libertarianism that positions itself, or rather is necessarily positioned, in direct contrast to the civilizing demands of Control. This nihilism necessarily includes a predilection for independence, and this is often Romanticized in historical attempts to create a culturally unitary Roma subject. “In ancient times,” quotes a 1935 issue of *Roma Lil*, “...there was a job for everyone. [The Roma] earned well and lived happily. Everyone could find work, everyone could do whatever job they wanted to” (cited in Ackovic 208:373). After a brief mention of the traditional Belgrade *mahala*'s relationship with its elected mayors and its methods for dealing with internal disputes, the excerpt goes on to emphasize their independence from the State as well as the eventual consequence of this independence.

> By living under clear skies our ancestors didn't pay any tax to the state... When Knez Mihailo ordered that each Roma must have his own house, the young people were the first to obey.... they advised their elders to do the same. But the authorities started to forcefully displace the tenant of gypsy tents, and therefore everyone started to search for a place to live. (373)

The author of this text looks at this period before the expulsions with fondness even though he acknowledges the superiority of fixed housing given the cold Belgrade winters. This fondness is not based on a Romantic nostalgia for nomadism, but rather an appreciation of independence from the State and a warning about its capabilities. This last point is vital. *Ciganizam* cannot be viewed solely from a ‘cultural’ frame, but is tied inexorably to the growth of the State. It is here that we find the immanent violence of its critical agency. When *cigani* are named *en masse* in the interwar period, it is often in order to speak to their relationship to the state’s order. When this order, under Nazi occupation, turns from extermination through integration to extermination through murder, *ciganizam* changes tack as well, no longer exposing the violence embedded in the State’s contempt for nomadism by resisting relocation, but by denying any pretense to civility in fascist violence. Violence is exposed as *immanent* to the State’s order.

Nothing about *ciganizam* is unproblematic or easy for those who are duly concerned with the Romanticization of suffering or the exoticization of the Other. Yet here I am offering up enticing fodder for both tendencies. I beg the reader, however, to consider the following with the weight it is owed considering the horror of its subject. Milovan Pisarri's emotionally trying book *The Suffering* *of the Roma in Serbia During the Holocaust* cites a first-hand report by one Lieutenant Valter on a days work of mass executions. In this report, as an aside, he mentions that the mass execution of gypsies has a different character than that of Jews:

> Execution of Jews is simpler than that of Gypsies. One must admit that Jews went into death very composedly – they stood very calmly while Gypsies moaned, yelled and constantly fidgeted even when already at the place of shooting. Some jumped into the hole even before the salvo and tried to feign death.

Again, the rational order at the heart of statehood, the illusions of humanity in the most inhuman of circumstances are abandoned and, indeed, shown for what they really are: masks concealing the real horror of modernity. We see in this black grotesque an instinct to rewrite the rules, a frantic and desperate attempt to undo and remake what is expected by denying the gory demands of calculated rule and even trying to game the system by feigning death.

The book contains another example, less bloody but no less tragic, shortly before the above episode took place when hundreds of Belgrade gypsies were rounded up and delivered to Banjica. A great number of these captives took their musical instruments with them and performed Rossini's overture to *The Barber of Seville* on what would be their last night on earth. Here we see a brutal internment camp transformed into a gypsy orchestra. The response to this inversion was as violent as one might expect; following the performance, the instruments were rounded up, broken, and burned by attending police. The absolute violence immanent in their legal detention, indeed of Control itself, was unearthed merely by a refusal to be silent. I see, I hope not unfairly, analogues to this even today as gypsy youth board public transportation with their phones blasting their favorite songs as well-behaved citizens remain quite and as visibly annoyed as appropriate. *beograđani* are not known for their aural restraint or subtlety, yet there is something clearly bothersome about gypsy noise outside of its traditional confines in the *kafana*. Citizens are turned into police, even if this enforcement entails little more than a dirty look; a tiny violence for a tiny offense.

Koko Lepo twice hosted a sort of DIY theater event by its participants and for its participants. The second attempt produced some very interesting commentary on the experiences of the older participants of Školica in relation to the state. In one performance, improvised on the spot and supported by a hastily selected bank of costume materials, the kids enacted a stop and frisk type scenario. Half played themselves as they walked leisurely through the mahala while the other played police officers who were in the process of stopping them. The police officers threw the mahala residents against the wall calling them “fucking Gypsies” and searching through their pockets. The children who played themselves assumed the universal position against the wall with their hands behind their head and their legs spread. The performance quickly devolved into overt violence as the mahala children had enough of the abuse and began to attack the police at will, resulting in a rapidly expanding conflagration as well as the elimination of any pretense to plot or story. Youth fantasies about standing up to Control are nothing surprising, of course, but the framing of the conflict is what animates agency in *ciganizam*. The role the police play in the children's imagination is one that is specifically anti-ciganist, creating them as gypsy subjects through abuse and harassment. The role the *mahala* residents play is a self-imagined gypsy fantasy of disruption and rejection of rule and the State order. Whether violins in a concentration camp or an imaginary youth riot against police, the enactment of a *ciganist* moment necessarily entails a confrontation of Control with its own unpredictability and violence. Being accused of barbarism by barbaric treatment, *ciganizam* can turn the tables on its own creation by returning accusations of barbarism to their source. *Ciganizam* is the void that stares back.

Incompatibility with representation: communicative irrationality

In the middle of renovations, the private owner of the property upon which Inex stood happened by with a colleague to assess the costs of securitizing the building. Discovering that we had not yet left, he angrily demanded our speedy exit. Fearing an assault by private security we resolved to strip the place down and whatever we couldn't sell for capital we would use for a new space. We explained the situation to our friends from the settlement and their responses were markedly at odds with those of our citizen colleagues. Our allies in the Ministry of Space NGO suggested meeting lawyers and researching abandoned State spaces and there was some internal discussion about making a media spectacle of the eviction to gain popular sympathy. The people from the settlement, however, responded with an assertive and dangerous indignation. “My kids go to school here!” protested one of our fathers, Zoki, “Who is this guy? We'll help you! Should I bring a gun?”. The suggestions of the ‘whites’ among us entailed either a legalistic approach, some form of negotiation, or appealing to the public sphere – communicative rationality. Zoki father, in starkest contrast, cut directly to the root of the issue and brought to the fore the relations of force which truly drive the State empowerment of property; forcey. Another more productive and far less gruesome suggestion was that we evicted collective members should accompany some of the residents of Deponija on a trip around the slum to examine some abandoned buildings that they themselves knew to be unoccupied and structurally sound through their own explorations of structures in the area. While not as direct as Zoki's suggestion above, such willful disregard for even the existence of property law – no one questioned the value or propriety of squatting – flies in the face of liberalism's sacred basis. There is an unspoken police order at the crux of liberal politics, *ciganizam* chips away at the liberal mask until the cop is exposed underneath.

Ciganizam also problematizes liberal conceptions of Roma nationalism. The most openly political Roma hip-hop band in Serbia today, Gipsy Mafia, has long maintained an overtly anti-capitalist and anti-State stance. Even their simplest statements, “Fuck the police”, prevent co-optation by Roma liberals by raging against its statist aspirations while, nonetheless, displaying the Roma national symbol in some of their propaganda. Personal conversations with another Roma hip-hop legend, Kastro Brijani, have revealed a similar contempt for political careerism under the Roma banner. Kastro laughed off my questions about fellow Nis-based Roma activist, Osman Balic, the Serbian figurehead of the Decade for Roma Inclusion and founder of the Roma Collector's Union, waving him away like an unwelcome cloud of cigarette smoke. Ervin, one of our kindergarten parents in *naselje* expressed equal, if not greater contempt for Balic when I inquired about his union. After emphasizing his autonomy from Ibn and the fact that he owed nobody for his home, he rejected the very idea of a collector's union, saying, “it's better to be your own boss than to have someone screwing with you”. Ervin split no hairs over the connection of representation to a loss of autonomy. It was not my impression that he was against collective efforts, in fact he knew well the collective basis of the kindergarten which he had nothing but praise for, this was rather a rejection of representation.

The Problem of Interpellation: how Gipsy Mafia imagines gypsy-ness

Althussar's notion of interpellation does not allow for much agency beyond a person's active adoption of their interpellated identities. Certainly, one is *born* a gypsy in Belgrade, but when does one recognize themselves as gypsy as opposed to Roma, refugee, *beograđanin*, etc? Under what conditions is one willing to take on that identity or even speak on its behalf? It is easy enough to find circumstances where one *accepts* their gypsiness in moments of anti-*ciganizam*, moments where representatives of the dominant population group imbue gypsiness within them as a means of transcending the filth of consumer capitalism. Much more difficult, however, is locating moments of *ciganizam* that are overtly positive or imply solidarity. Gipsy Mafia must be invoked yet again in this instance. When I asked them about their band name, they gave a tactically minded response that will no doubt appear problematic to those interested in Roma nation-building:

> First of all, we are aware that 'gypsy" is a racist word. However, we also know that even if the entire Roma population tries to ban the word, they will never succeed. That is because it is a totally wrong tactic. Rather than trying to prohibit that word, we should do more to make sure that 'gypsy' does not mean a person stealing, cheating, dirty etc., but that a true Gypsy is a person like everyone else. Gypsies can be a neighbor, a comrade, a friend, but that of course there are fools who make shit, the same as everybody else.

Here, Gipsy Mafia identifies the basis of the identification as a racist one, yet offers a non-violent and communicative approach to reclaiming it. Moreover, the assertion that a "true gypsy" is "just like everyone else" reverses the direction of the epithet and demands that the oppressor examine themselves to understand the nature of the oppressed. This extends to their understanding of the word "fascist", juxtaposed, as it is in their lyrics, to the idea of the gypsy:

> I can feel it on my skin every day. People think that fascists are only those who are bald and wear those stupid boots, but it is not so... When I go to the doctor and need to make an appointment – and then make an appointment for eight in the morning, get there at seven-thirty, it's only at five in the evening that I brought into the cue. They just don't think you're here. This is fascism. It is the doctor, or the grocery clerk, or the policemen who stops you in the middle of the city where there are hundreds of people. … It must be such a show for all to see in the middle of the city; you have to take off your jacket, pull everything out of your pockets, take off your shoes. ... All these people watching are automatically looking for criminals. If only you stand alone on a street corner, you are automatically guilty.[54]

They feel their skin under the "fascist gaze" and, by using this powerful and accusative terminology, they condemn the holistic agency of the State by calling out the hidden politics of the grocer and doctor in the same breath as the cop. The capacity to judge criminality is not merely in the hands of the official state police, but is just as much in the hands of ordinary citizens who produce a police effect.

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[54] Interview with Gipsy Mafia found at: www.lupiga.com/vijesti/gipsy-mafia-hip-hop-antifa-punk-cigani-gde-to-ima

When I asked what the political difference is between the idea of "Roma" and that of "Gypsy", the band asserted that none exists for them; they are, in their words, "24/7, 365 days a year *cigani*". That said, they acknowledge that a certain class identity seems to pervade Roma/Gypsy interpellation among many in the Roma community:

> Unfortunately, there are *cigani* among us who consider that a *cigan* who is a little more literate and maybe lives in better conditions is a "Rom", and a *cigan* who lives in the *mahala* is '*Cigan*', which is, of course, total nonsense. For the Serbs, names for one or the other don't exist.

Here again, the majority population is invoked as an interlocutor in gypsyness, implying that anti-*ciganizam* makes no real differentiation between gypsies in the way some Roma might themselves do. Intra-Roma differentiation on both moral and political grounds has been apparent in my fieldwork and is well documented in Romological literature, but Gipsy Mafia promotes a *ciganizam* that inverts the monolithic racism of 'the Serbs' and reverses it into something more like a class. I do not use the term 'class' here lightly, Gipsy Mafia takes a principled stand against class exploitation and capitalism in general in both their music and public presence, calling themselves a "revolutionary movement" despite having only three members in the band itself. Despite their commitment to class struggle, they, like Sait, are not interested in joining the labor union at their German workplace assembling car parts for BMW. They worry about the union's ties to political parties and are not interested in being represented, even as German workers, on such terms.

The disruptive 'gypsy': less Benedict, more Scott

My main motivation for gambling on this final argument of the chapter has been primarily to urge future anthropologists searching for 'gypsies' against baiting their ethnographic hooks with culture or tradition. One may, however, find them by interrogating Control. *Ciganizam* is no culture, but a nihilistic affirmation of the violence that masquerades as it. Confronted by an ever-present condition of normative anti-ciganism, the most common origin of the gypsy epithet in the public sphere, any affirmation of 'gypsyness' has within it a disruptive political effect. In getting to know my friends and comrades, both child and adult, in *Deponija*, I have simultaneously been allowed to see the holistic agency of the State in all its masks. Only in peering behind these masks, only in uncovering the bases of power in Belgrade, do I understand the structural basis of the gypsy in my city. The gypsy provides a timeless sacrificial lamb for the transcendence of Europeans everywhere, a path to 'whiteness', but only so long as she cooperates; it is hard to sacrifice a lamb that beys, kicks, and wastes upon the altar. Lamb's are chosen for their docility, *ciganizam* is anything but.

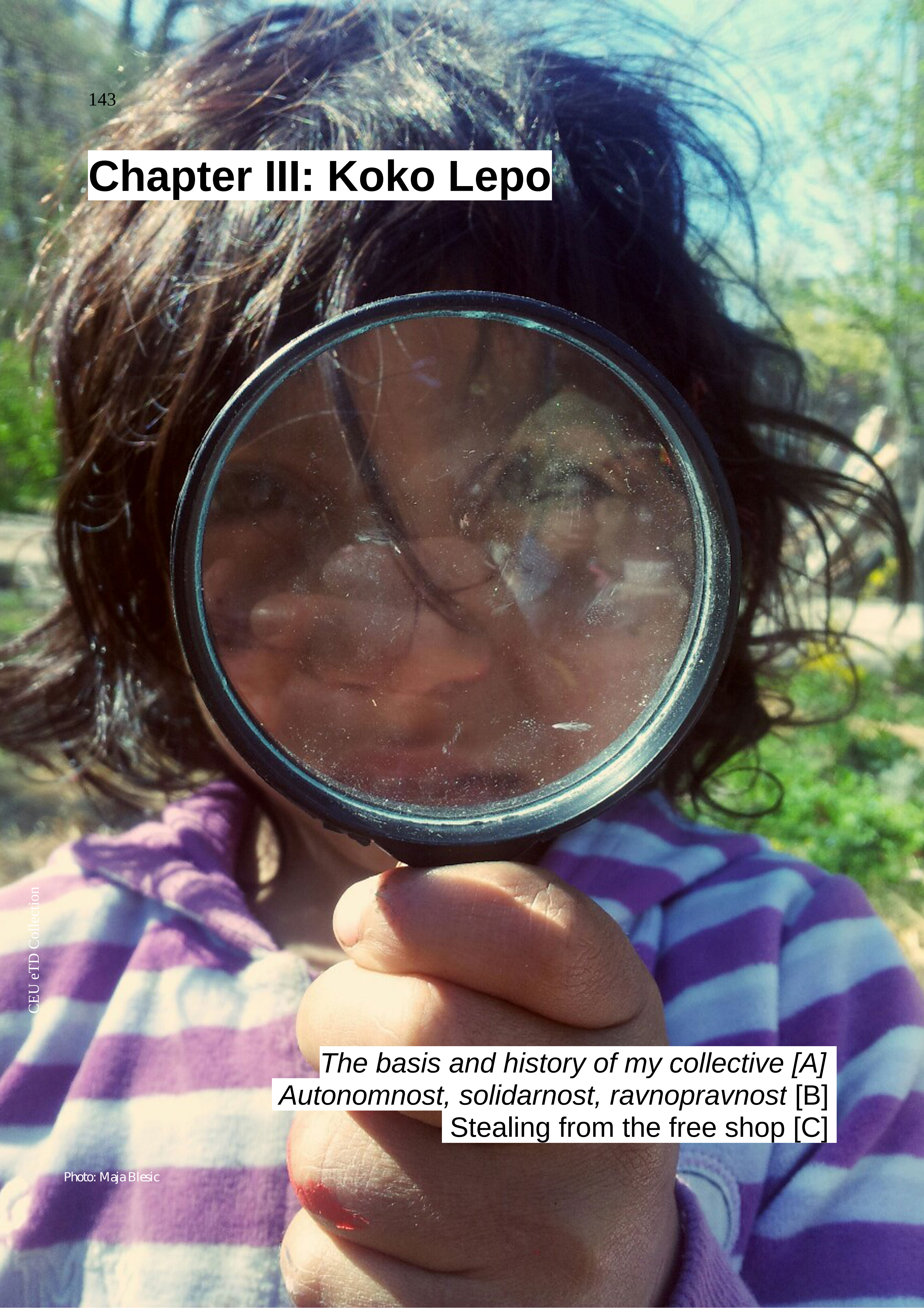
This leads me to support a conclusion that is far more akin to James Scott, David Graeber, and Michael Taussig than the culturally relativistic 'Benedictine' approach of Thomas Acton, Ian Hancock, and even Michael Stewart that descends from the historical particularist school of anthropology. Gypsies are not the remnant protectors of an ancient culture, but political objects constantly reinventing their subjectivity in numerous, and often disruptive ways. I think, in some ways, it would behoove us to look at the idea of *ciganizam* with much the same lens as its enemies in the 18th century English state did, as something unable to succumb to representation, something subversive even though it is evicted from public power, something confrontational and frightening in its weakness and marginalization, something both explosively loud and entirely invisible. An accused gypsy who stands-up openly as a gypsy does so with the entire weight of Control on her back, how can we not find struggle and conflict in her? How can we not see politics? Like anarchism, *ciganizam* is a total rejection of the terms of power of which it is a negative image. Unlike anarchism, it offers no Utopian trajectory, but nonetheless demands an end to the conditions of its own creation. Gypsies are not waiting *for* politics as so many Roma organizations seem to presume, gypsies are the reaction *to* politics!

Thus, the next chapter will describe the experimental tool I helped refine, the collective Koko Lepo, that allowed us to discover this agency and to recreate our own politics through re-imagined values of solidarity, equality, and autonomy.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the informal Roma settlement called Deponija as a site of profound social significance. I have placed it into the larger context of informal settlements in Serbia as well as introduced the abysmal conditions of life endured by the Belgrade Roma collector. I have taken a step back from a more traditional ethnographic description of culture or its presumed internal logic and have chosen instead to address the political economic realities that I believe shape and underpin the complex divisions and solidarities that make up the settlement and its cultural particularities. To this end, I have shown how concepts like "community leader" can in fact be seen as critical junctions in scales of class struggle and argued that some of the processes of proletarianization in the settlement are promoted by the liberal organization of the capitalist state. I have emphasized the cottage-industrial basis of the informal collecting economy, and provided a view into the spatial and social divisions precipitated by this form of value production. Furthermore, I exposed the daily reality of the class struggle at the heart of gender relations and expectations in the settlement, and have considered these relations from a political economic, holistic, and culturally relational perspective while maintaining a critical stance on the dynamics of power therein. This stance was coupled by a sensitivity to 'buried feminist agencies' and supported with ethnographic vignettes. I have offered macroeconomic, historical, and materialist explanations of both the slum and the ‘gypsy’. These included informality's relation to the profit margins of certain lines of industry, informality's possible ability to ameliorate some of the costs of a liberal international trade regime, and the role of racialized and gendered labor in reproducing the settlement's role in the global economy. I employed the symbolic anthropological mainstays of purity, danger and the sacrifice as a means of re-envisioning capitalism in Belgrade by exposing the ideological function of ghettoization on the popular and political maintenance of a disastrous system. Finally, I offered a framework for interpreting the radical political agency of ‘gypsy’ subjects called ‘*ciganizam’*, a definitive step away from Romantic culturalism and towards the anthropology of struggle. Taken as a whole the reader should now be equipped to appreciate the significance of the Koko Lepo intervention in the settlement, covered in the succeeding chapter, that bridged the otherwise vast cultural and political economic gap between the InexFilm squat and Deponija.

Chapter III: Koko Lepo



The basis and history of my collective [A]
Autonomnost, solidarnost, ravnopravnost [B]
Stealing from the free shop [C]

Photo: Maja Blesic

[III/A] The basis and history of my collective

The development and structure of the Koko Lepo collective and the unusual basis of my ethnographic intervention in Belgrade

Koko Lepo: direct action and mutual aid

The basis of my ethnographic intervention in Karaburma is a direct action collective called Koko Lepo, mentioned a number of times in this dissertation. The information and analyses I've been privy to are almost entirely attributable to the experimental trials and struggles of Koko Lepo's attempt to create new relations of solidarity in InexFilm, Deponija, Belgrade, and beyond. I have already made the case for collective activity as a basis for ethnographic work, so all that remains is an explanation of precisely how this intervention worked, as well as when it didn't. The experimental basis of direct action is paramount to understanding the sorts of insights that Koko Lepo offered to my anthropological narrative, insights I have endeavored to account for in the previous chapters.

Illustration 14: A piece by a visiting graffiti artist from Berlin painted over the kindergarten's windows

The Koko Lepo autonomous kindergarten bridged the gap between the InexFilm squat and the Deponija settlement. The program would, in fact, outlive the squat itself, continuing even after the building's loss in the form of the 'Školica' autonomous youth solidarity program. Koko Lepo was then, and remains today, an evolving collective built on experimentation and struggle. At the time of this writing, the participating adults in the collective number between five and eight, though the nature of membership in the collective has grown in complexity over the years. Today, this membership theoretically includes any and all of the young participants from Deponija, and they occasionally join us for organizing meetings. In general, the collective's primary focus is on the promotion, creation, and practice of solidarity, equality, and autonomy among the members of the collective, in the relationship of the collective to the settlement, inside the settlement itself, in the city of Belgrade, and in the project's relationship with the world in general. While this may seem programatically amorphous or overly ambitious, Koko Lepo understands its project in concrete terms and with concrete relationships. Solidarity, for instance, is understood to be both solidarity *with* as well as solidarity *against* nameable human forces whose interests profit against those of the collective and the settlement, i.e. particular people from Inex, neo-nazi groups like Srbska Akcija, the police, property developers, etc.. Equality, in turn, is understood as working against inequity; attacking the underlying structural bases for inequality and not simply the inequality-effect in a liberal ideological sense. Koko Lepo specifically connects racism and sexism to political economic orders, offering exclusive spaces at the expense of hegemonic others and de-centering decision making structures. Autonomy, for the Koko Lepo collective, entails a commitment to act independently of the State, NGOs, and capitalist firms, but also implies a particular focus on trust and responsibility. Internal debates on autonomy have often taken the form of challenges to members about their relationship to the ideology of the police state and have resulted in demands that the collective operate from a position of independence from legalism and authoritarianism.

This chapter will summarize the bases and histories of the autonomous kindergarten and the Školica youth solidarity program as well as a number of its experimental successes and failures. It will focus on the internal constitution of the Koko Lepo collective and address the problem of collective ideals in membership. I will elucidate and expand upon these ideals and show the struggle and dynamic antagonisms in the constitution of the collective during the evolution of these bases. The Školica youth solidarity program will then, in its turn, be connected to the problem of urban citizenship, dispossession, and generalized racism in the city. Anthropologically, this chapter invokes the concepts of sacrifice and incommensurability to give a sense of concreteness to its tripartite value system of equality, solidarity, and autonomy. Focusing on dual acts of condemnation and cleansing, I employ a number of anecdotes from my ethnographic experience to illustrate my central argument: the Koko Lepo collective is a social laboratory that realizes its values through concrete acts of severance and condemnation which are simultaneously acts of joining and aligning. This contributes to the growing anthropological literature on political groups as ethnographic subjects, revitalizes the interpretive approach through a critical lens of struggle, and elucidates the concrete processes by which solidarity is constructed.

Koko Lepo autonomous kindergarten: a two-year experiment in struggle

I joined the Koko Lepo autonomous kindergarten in its second month of operation. It was presented to me at the time by one of its founding members as an "anarchist kindergarten". Being an anarchist with a strong background in early childhood education myself, I was immediately excited at the concept. This description, I would find, was wildly inadequate and misleading even if the kindergarten did originally operate out of the anarchist infoshop in the squat. Its 'anarchist' elements, so-to-speak, would not reach maturation until quite late in the collective's development and remain a contested and constantly re-negotiated subject within the project itself. As I have already provided a theoretical framework for approaching the creation of collective politics in chapter one, I won’t dwell overlong on those same processes within Koko Lepo during its kindergarten period. Instead, I will narrate that period as a prehistory to its incarnation as a youth solidarity program and continue our interrogation of sacred politics therein.

Illustration 15: An early kindergarten session. Note the bookshelves of the infoshop have been re-purposed with puzzles and children's books

The original idea for the kindergarten was developed primarily by two women rejecting the prohibitive bureaucratic strictures involved in NGO work in the area of Roma youth support in Belgrade. The women were from mixed backgrounds ideologically, one, in her late 20s, was an active anarchist feminist and the other, in her early 20s, a generally apolitical socialite with general ssympathies for the plight Roma children in Belgrade. The idea properly originated with the socialite, who admits in interview that she came up with the idea for the kindergarten as a way to “fit in” at the InexFilm squat. The kindergarten at first reached out to a local NGO working with Roma children from nearby Mali Leskovac, though the inefficiency of the process turned the project forever against future collaboration with NGOs, especially as gatekeepers of the oppressed. Nominally aware of Deponija's presence so coincidentally close to the squat, the nascent collective included a small handful of other interested people working at the squat into their yet-incomplete vision and decided to reach out directly to the families of the slum. Among these early members was a Macedonian resident of the squat who had been leading kitchen-related activities at Inex; he was a good fit for the radical social element of Inex with his propagandistic tattoos and declared love of all things anarchist and punk. More importantly he claimed to have a wealth of experience working with Roma youth in Macedonia, though it would later be discovered that this experience was in a rather strict missionary program. Possessing an enviable handle on the Roma language, Gricko was the first to make contact with families from the settlement. The first family that showed interest in Gricko and the kindergarten happened to be that of Ibn, the infamous slumlord from the previous chapter. Little did anyone know at the time, but these two personalities would plant the seeds of some of the project's most tragic and enduring problems while simultaneously, indeed paradoxically, creating a lot of the early momentum which helped make the program a success in those first few months of operation.

Gricko, as alluded to chapter one, was not the man we thought he was. He held patriarchal sway over the operations of the early kindergarten and was a central source of discomfort for women visitors to the squat and most of the female members of the collective. Few in those early months, however, were prepared or equipped to see him as problem he would eventually become; his sexism would be less a cause of outage as much as a source of individualistic concern for the mental health of Gricko himself and not his growing number of victims. One of his female supporters, a nineteen year old university student and member of Koko Lepo, was usually quick to remind everyone that

Gricko was a recovering heroin addict and suffered from mental trauma; she, along with many others in the squat, advised a soft touch and patience with his abusive behavior on these grounds. The minority support for him in the kindergarten collective was more than sufficient to keep him firmly entrenched therein. Although committed in rhetoric to the consensus process, our understanding of its limits were still undeveloped in the early kindergarten and this lack of ideological clarity proved fertile grounds for Gricko's informal authoritarianism.

For the first six months of its formative period, the kindergarten operated four to five days a week. Classes would start mid-morning and finished in the early afternoon. After failing to have the parents drop their kids off themselves, it became custom for the teachers to do the pickup and drop-off everyday. Upon reaching the squat, the children would be made to line up in front of the main entrance as one of the teachers unlocked the heavy infoshop door. The kids would invariably run screaming down the long and dark concrete hallway, their voices resonating throughout the building occasionally startling those sleeping upstairs. Children would settle in to the classroom amid the clutter of books and toys that we had to hide away at the end of every day in consideration of the infoshop's other activities. Everyday was anchored around the calendar lesson; children would learn days of the week, seasons, numbers, months, and an introduction to both Serbian alphabets as well as some basic reading. Although the calendar lesson was full of songs and group participation, it was invariably the most didactic activity of the day. Gricko, of course, was the author of this activity, having reconstructed it from his hidden experiences at a Christian missionary program in Macedonia. The format reproduced mass discipline, not quite the anarchy I was looking for. With his characteristically masculine severity and a strategic use of code switching between Romany and Serbian, Gricko trained this first class of students to respect the authority of the teacher and to respect him above the others. We anarchists in the collective were uncomfortable by this mode of organization, but for lack of a better idea, not to mention the courage to stand-up to the only person with experience in Roma solidarity work, his format survived for a little under a year.

Apart from the calendar lesson, the class also included broader scholastic themes which would most commonly be delivered in a similarly didactic manner with some creative participation by the students. For instance, if the theme was 'careers', certain visual aids would be made before the class began and children would participate in a controlled manner by using the materials under the teachers instruction and in front of their peers, who sat back as a small mass of spectators and hopeful future participants. In these days, subjects and activities very much resembled a traditional classroom; this would cease to be true after Gricko's elimination from the collective some months later. The bulk of the class day however was devoted to free time. Children made use of donated toys and art supplies and moved freely under the watchful eye of between three and six adult collective members. As aids, we wrote and performed educational songs for the children, some of which eventually became mainstays in the settlement itself. After walking the children home each day, teachers would often find ourselves enjoying coffees and sweets in the houses of our hard-working parents who made us feel at home.

Illustration 16: Sanja leads a calendar lesson with a volunteer in the new classroom

Eventually, the kindergarten was able to move out of the infoshop and into its own space. The two artists in charge of the InexFilm gallery agreed to let the kindergarten move into their studios under the condition that we build them new studios upstairs next to their exhibition space. This was accomplished by the shared labor of the kindergarten collective and the anarchists from the infoshop as well as a number of regular unaffiliated comrades. In this period, Gricko's misogyny had become impossible to ignore; it was a major bone of contention between members of Koko Lepo, as well as between members of the infoshop collective and the 'apolitical' part of InexFilm who overwhelmingly supported him. Taking a cue from the epochal momentum of acquiring our own space, the anarchists of Koko Lepo elected me to speak with him about his behavior, which I did. The results of this discussion radically altered the social and political organization of the Koko Lepo collective. I was crushed by his aggressive reaction and resolved, along with my anarchist comrades in the collective, to begin moving against him and towards a renewed and more anarchist collective. We self-divided into pro- and anti-Gricko factions which fell very cleanly, at first, along the lines of anarchist versus liberal and apolitical ideological distinctions. Eventually, Gricko himself put an end to the conflict by sexually assaulting one of the mothers in the settlement, the fate of whom I cover in the previous chapter.

The elimination of Gricko from the squat and the collective, in fact from Belgrade itself, gave the anarchists of the kindergarten collective the chance they needed to re-create the kindergarten in their own image. This process was not without internal objections. A significant portion of the collective remained radically apolitical and instinctively opposed to the thorough restructuring and ideological refining of the collective proposed by the anarchists. Year two of the Koko Lepo collective was largely shaped by these discussions and experiments in anti-authoritarianism. Eventually the liberal/apolitical section of the collective moved on, the oldest members forming a short-lived private kindergarten business in Zemun, while those more overtly devoted to the concepts of autonomy, solidarity, and equality as active condemnations of the State and capitalism remained to continue the project along those lines.

In practice, this transition meant a number of changes in the operation of the kindergarten. It no longer worked five days a week but rather two-to-four days a week depending on the availability of teachers. Partially due to the damage done by Gricko during his tenure, whereby the mass of the settlement had begun to see the kindergarten as "Gricko's kindergarten", as well as for reasons of safety in crossing the street and managing the children, it was decided that no less than three adults from the collective should be present at all times. Furthermore, all activities during the class period would now be voluntary and students would be provided with a number of alternatives for any given activity. Instead of coercing the students' cooperation, as Gricko had done in the past and as other collective members had acquiesced to replicating, the adults would now be there to encourage participation, protect the physical safety and integrity of the children, and facilitate the students meeting their own interests in their personal and social development. The calendar lesson remained, but as often as was possible the teaching duties were passed on to the students themselves who had already learned the information and who relished the chance to share it with their fellow classmates. Warm-up activities were also introduced to encourage a feeling of mutuality and comfort in the room, and free time was substantially expanded with an eye to facilitating the individual development of the students. The repertoire of songs was also increased and became a more central part of the class than ever before. Moreover, whereas in the original incarnation of the kindergarten, hot vegetarian meals were provided daily to the students, the post Gricko kindergarten relied more heavily on student participation in the preparation of those meals.

Illustration 17: Performing songs for the children while they wait for lunch. Photo: Maja Blesic

After a confrontational dispute between the collective and the socialite founder of the program in which she argued that corporal punishment for our students was “culturally” justifiable, the issue of discipline became one of immediate concern. This precipitated a critical reflection on our normal practices or order and an honest account of our use of violence in the kindergarten. This list included the use of raised voices, light slapping of hands, and the use of a punishment corner familiar to most state school children. As a result of this discussion and the meetings that followed, all forms of punishment were eliminated; at worst, if a child was completely out of sorts and endangering his classmates, and accompanied walks around the squat were not calming him down, then one of the teachers would have to walk him home. Having done so, however, the teachers had learned to present the child gently to the parents without ascribing guilt or faults with the child in order to prevent him from being beaten by his parents. The socialite herself would never return to the program. I will broach the subject of 'white discipline' later in this chapter.

The kindergarten program ended with the closure of InexFilm in October of 2015. By that time, Koko Lepo's new youth program, called “Školica”, was already in full swing and the collective's efforts moved away from early childhood education entirely and towards an afternoon program with the older children from Deponija. The demise of the kindergarten was mourned by all, no more so than by the four to seven-year-olds of the *naselje* with whom we’d worked most closely. Parental support was high and by its close the kindergarten had expanded to the very outskirts of the *naselje*, endearing itself to no less than 15 to 20 families therein. It is estimated that nearly 50 children passed through the Koko Lepo kindergarten in the two years of its operation. Those graduates of the kindergarten who made it into the official school system are reportedly doing well in their classes and receiving high praise from their teachers. As of this writing, a new kindergarten is planned; though space is currently lacking.

Every Collective is a Laboratory: Constitutional dynamics and microcosmic revolution

In chapter one, I showed that the capacity of an exilic heterotopia to maintain its otherworldliness depends on the establishment of clear divisions between the sacred and the profane. The profane includes the momentum of capitalism towards the homogenization of space, Lefevbre's 'isotopia', even as it divides spaces into an ordered urban division of labor. The InexFilm heterotopia, or 'space of exile' pace Grubačić and O'Hearn (2016), was a laboratory where we experimented in new relations and new forms of organization and worked towards an inversion of the profane through the practice of sacred politics. Likewise, Koko Lepo was its own microcosmic laboratory insomuch as it committed to the inversion or undoing of the outside world. This section will show how revolutionary processes of solidarity and division, of modes of communication and of cold, calculated conspiracy must be seen on the one hand as laboratory trials of greater social processes, and on the other as symbolically rich performances with the power to mark and condemn the 'inimical profane' of the macrocosm within the collective itself. Once more, we will use the struggles around Gricko to elucidate these processes.

It is imperative that we avoid the fallacy of simile in this analysis; the relations of power and the forms of organization inside the Koko Lepo collective are not merely *like* those of the world at large, they are microcosmic expressions of those relations and forms. Moreover, I wish to avoid over-relativizing scale by employing the word 'microcosm'; it is not my intention to imply that the Koko Lepo microcosm is a smaller version of the macrocosmic world system, but rather that it is a self-reproducing universe of meaning and motion onto itself, even as it is linked inexorably to the macrocosmic world system and is part of its grand constitution. Collectives are laboratories because of this dual nature of the microcosm; it is an expression of the whole yet it is an undeniably separate and self-reproducing system. This allows it to speak to the whole and, by nature of its scale, creatively punch through the social boundaries by which the whole is organized.

Unlike the business, the NGO, or the mission, Koko Lepo was not originally conceived as a collective, beginning with an open call for volunteers from the Inex general assembly. For most of its first year, it was a combination of two loosely connected affinity groups and one charismatic authority figure. One affinity group was anarchist, and had a moral position on the need organize against the usurpation of authoritarian impulses, and was comfortable taking distinctly ideological stances against a great many common social practices and kinds of relations. The anarchists of the Koko Lepo group were, or eventually would be, also organized in the 'Furija' infoshop collective, where the kindergarten and *Školica* itself were both first held. The second affinity group came from the apolitical tendency in Inex, discussed at some length in a preceding chapter. This group had little interest in race or gender politics and often stated that the anarchists' concerns about such politics detracted from the kindergarten's abilities to "work for the children". The individual charismatic authority embodied by Gricko was allied closely with the apolitical cultural elements of Inex, yet aesthetically, he appeared very much the anarchist punk. As I explained in the previous section, this persona would prove to be disingenuous yet difficult to shatter. So, despite the presence of a committed anarchist contingent, the collective nonetheless geared initially towards liberalism and the sensitivities thereof.

In an analogous manner to Gramsci’s warnings about the relationship of ‘common sense’ to ‘good sense’, the ‘common’ sense apoliticians proved a powerful counterrevolutionary force in the collective whose ‘good’ sense should have nipped the developing hierarchy in the bud. Much like the Occupy Wall Street movement in Manhattan referenced in chapter one, the newly formed Koko Lepo working group acceded to anarchist organizational strategies yet produced markedly liberal critiques[55]. Robbed of their ideological bases, consensus decision-making devolved into charismatic strategies of concession by exhaustion and claims to the expertise of Gricko that no one else could possibly equal, despite the fact that three career teachers were participants in the early program. Gricko's authority blossomed from the organizational expressions of liberal ideals of equality. Gricko's right to overtake, interrupt, and ignore the female voices of the collective, at least those of whom he wasn't interested in sexually, was held in equal standing and seen to be just as valid as the female members' attempts to critique him. Having fetishized the consensus process as an end in and of itself, the anarchist element of the embryonic collective allowed the organization to continue in this way, hoping that 'good sense' would magically prevail over common sense. While this conundrum is easy enough to recognize in hindsight, the anarchists of the early collective were unaware that they were stumbling through an authoritarian forest from all of its avowedly libertarian trees.

Koko Lepo, then called “little friends” after Gricko's former kindergarten in Macedonia, planned each week at a regular meeting. At first, these meetings were held in Gricko's own room in the squat. As tensions between the anarchists and Gricko's supporters began to rise however, these meetings moved to either the lounge space in the squat or the outdoor areas like the garden or balcony. By this time, the infoshop collective was already considering banning Gricko from their space, but as the kindergarten by then had its own space, this discussion had, unfortunately, little bearing the organization of Koko Lepo. As the meetings moved increasingly away from Gricko's domain of influence, he found himself attending less meetings, as well as less of each meeting, and proceeded to conspire, instead, with those few he retained under his influence. Slowly, the kindergarten collective was split, again, into two distinct factions. Whereas once these factions were superficially linked through Gricko, they were now deeply separated by him.

The 'anarchist' faction, itself made up of several non-anarchists, continued to meet regularly as the Koko Lepo collective; those still clinging to Gricko's authority, numbering at most two by this time, continued to operate in the kindergarten yet with much less formality and almost no peer oversight. At the collectives lowest point, only four people constituted the base of the group with allies joining irregularly: two primary organizers on each side. One of us from the minute anarchist ‘affinity duo’ would always be there when Gricko was working. This effectively doubled the work time of everyone from both factions in a frantic attempt to prevent the other from dominating the group through labor. Other members still existed at this time, though their presence was infrequent and their loyalties undecided.

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[55] The key similarities between OWS and Inex are discussed in the second chapter.

Over time, the anarchists managed to increase their number of allies by expanding the collective's membership. As nearly all of the members were women, and these women had experienced firsthand oppressive gazes and misogynistic attitudes, the anarchists of Koko Lepo and their friends in the infoshop managed to form a more powerful voice against the charismatic leader. Testimony was heard in the Inex general meetings, though very little came of it. The primary results within Koko Lepo, however, were the increased marginalization of Gricko and his now-single supporter and the increasing hegemony of the anarchist organizers in the collective. The decision to finally be rid of him was made collectively in an informal trial with evidence heard, cases made, and arguments deliberated while the accused waited outside for our judgment. Despite the many months of complaints elicited by the anarchist elements in the squat against Gricko, the cultural elements of Inex had apparently never accepted the accusations until they were compiled into a single body of evidence which was then presented as a cohesive whole in Gricko's final Inex meeting. Even then, many were reluctant to rid themselves of the charismatic figure, and the anarchists in Koko Lepo and the infoshop were blamed for withholding information that could have led to earlier action.

While the crisis of patriarchy within the collective had essentially been dealt with, the crisis of apolitics remained. This was rightly a “crisis” in the etymological sense of a turning point, a border between two distinctions, and a moment of judgment. Apoliticism was disguised, as it often is, as common sense; new members brought into Koko Lepo under the auspices of the remaining 'cultural' participants in the squat rejuvenated the ideals and relations of the profane macrocosm in our evolving microcosmic social laboratory. We ‘anarchists’ experimented with various forms of diplomacy with the apolitical movement: we encouraged dialogue and open discussion, we emphasized the centrality of the international anarchist and antifascist network in the collectives existence and survival, we juxtaposed the collective's work and ideals to the demands of the world outside of it to emphasize the need to pick a side in their struggle, we attempted to educate the liberals about the extent of racist oppression and exploitation suffered by the users of the kindergarten as well as tried to provide historically-based structural interpretations of how this condition came to be. Ultimately, it was direct action and the theft of property from Đura for the benefit of the Koko Lepo program which proved most effective in forcing some of the members to make real decisions about their future involvement, and the reasons for that involvement, in the Koko Lepo collective. Three direct actions precipitated the eventual flight of apoliticism from the Koko Lepo collective, all of which are discussed elsewhere in this dissertation: the forced expulsion of Gricko, the theft of a room from the cultural users of Inex, and a physical intervention at a party in the squat held by the cultural users precipitated by comments perceived to be misogynistic and combative by the Inex anarchists.

By this time, Koko Lepo was divided into two working groups: the kindergarten and the *Školica* youth program. The political struggles of the former were far less present in the latter as the apoliticians and one of the collective’s original anarchists preferred working with the younger boys and girls, finding the older children too difficult to handle. *Školica*, for reasons unclear to me, attracted more ideologically uniform organizers and were instrumental in formalizing the collective’s final ideological character, including the sacred politics of the three values: equality, solidarity, and autonomy.

The Školica youth Solidarity program

Školica, meaning "little school", was originally imagined as an after-school program for the older children of Deponija. The idea for it came largely out of necessity; older children regularly showed up during the hours of the kindergarten and, despite their often benevolent intentions, inevitably caused some level of disturbance to the operations in the squat. Prior to this decision, the Koko Lepo collective experimented with the use of 'helpers' from the settlement. A 'helper' was a child or teenager too old to participate in the kindergarten but too young to be a regular collective member. The helper system proved inadequate and poorly organized, however, and the supply of potential helpers in the settlement far outweighed our capacity to simultaneously work with both them and the dozen or so kindergarten students in each class.

The first 'little school' sessions were designed to aid the children in their regular studies. Due to the irregularity of their attendance, many of the students were ill-equipped and uninterested in this form of activity. The program then moved more into the idea of shared projects and discussions. Once again, the infoshop became a classroom which did, to the delight of the anarchists in the Koko Lepo collective and the Furija infoshop, occasionally result in some interest in the anarchist literature and propaganda scattered throughout the room. *Školica* quickly outgrew the walls of the info shop, and the program began experimenting with excursions. At this point, the squat was closed down and the Koko Lepo program was homeless.

Illustration 18: An early Školica in the infoshop

One might have been forgiven in the early days of *Školica* had they described these first incursions as a kind of torrential madness. Between 20 and 30 children, sometimes even more, would load a public bus from Deponija and travel to any number of public or private spaces in the city of Belgrade. The actual planning of each day was theoretically carried out by the collective at least one day prior, though the excursions themselves rarely conformed to our designs. Besides the conflicts between the older children of the *naselje* and those of the *mahala* alluded to in the previous chapter, the children rarely had a clear idea about what the Koko Lepo was or why we were out together. The adult organizers, even when briefly bolstered by Deponija resident Đani's participation, often found themselves at wits' end and exhausted, much as the teachers of the early kindergarten felt in their first few months. To rectify this, *Školica* was again subdivided into two general age groups: 7 to 10 and 11 to 14. This helped the collective better manage the mass of children and pre-teens and allowed them a bit of cognitive space to better appreciate and learn about the individual needs and personalities of each participant.

As with the kindergarten, the Koko Lepo *Školica* program continued to function on a consensus basis through weekly meetings and online discussions in a private forum. By this time, any remnants of Gricko supporters or their ilk had vanished from the ranks of the collective and strides were being made to include, not only adult residents of Deponija like Đani, but also occasionally children in the planning and organizing of each event. Since the little school was a weekly program and is not day-to-day, scholastic themes were unnecessary and the general labor requirements were comparatively far lighter. The downside of this program, in the eyes of the collective members, was the necessary rarity of these events; a child in one age group would, at most, be able to attend two events per month. To date, the collective has considered undergoing longer-term projects with the children to ameliorate this limitation. The planning and organizational meetings of Koko Lepo have lost their formal character almost completely since the establishment of clear ideological principles after the closure of Inex. The collective considers itself an affinity group and its meetings have all the character of a get-together with longtime friends, though with the inclusion of a note-taking moderator.

Školica has had events in public swimming pools, movie theaters, several parks, sports centers, a ‘hacklab’, leftist NGO spaces, cafés, and the homes of collective members themselves. Organizational innovations in Školica have included a girls group where the teenage girls of the settlement can meets with the women of the collective to discuss specifically gendered issues, or simply to hang out without the male gaze or domestic obligations, a kid-run consensus meeting where children have the opportunity to plan events and consider the finances of the organization, a graffiti workshop where children were given paints and encouraged to graffiti spaces near the settlement, and there is currently talk about co-constructing the new Koko Lepo space near Deponija with the children from Školica as well as a long-term 'zine' workshop.

Illustration 19: An outing to a public park in Čukarica

Koko Lepo continues to be funded exclusively by interested individuals, anarchist and antifascist collectives, the European and Balkan punk and hard-core music scene, and local benefit parties. Notably, the group rejects requests for stories and interviews from capitalist press and shares information primarily through tours between allied spaces as well as through anarchist press and radio.

Right to the City or Molecular Storm System?

As I said, after Inex's collapse, there was nothing very school-like about the 'Little School', it's primary activity being field trips into the White City. Downtown Belgrade, usually a place of work for *Deponija*'s collectors, was transformed in such excursions into a place of recreation. What started as a way for the older children of the settlement to use the squat as a place to do homework, receive tutoring, or engage in special projects had transformed into a radical claiming of urban spaces by the marginalized. To outsiders, it appeared to pass through Belgrade like an unintelligible tornadic spectacle. Sometimes, people asked us questions about the program, at other times they would smile and make sympathetic eye-contact with the frantic adults steering its pirate ship through the youthful tempest. All too often, however, *beograđani* grumble, suck their teeth, and pull their own children closer, shaking their heads in righteous disapproval as we glare back at them. The fact is, Roma users of Belgrade have a long documented history of exclusion and marginalization in the post-war period of the 2000s in even the most casual of recreational spaces (ERRC 2003:52), and while Koko Lepo has never been turned away from a place like individual Roma have, the attitudes of many on the street and working in various locations is unmistakably hostile.

It is tempting to associate these excursions with something like a “right to the city” motivation but there are several barriers prohibiting a perfectly clean connection. “The Right to the city”, in Lefevbre's formulation, is an act of defragmentation in which the capitalist city would be destroyed and replaced with a broad global idea of the urban (1972). The need for fragmented machine-urbanism would vanish as the rural would no longer be in sociopolitical contradistinction to the urban, and the divisions placed upon populations through the state production of space, either through zoning or ghettoization, would cease to define the city's human geography. David Harvey inherited this formula and refined it, defining the city itself as the material-spatial distribution/centralization of surplus and suggesting that critical researchers ought to shift their focus from factories as the locus of capitalist production to cities (2012). Despite their desire to “democratize” the production of spaces, hence control over the surplus of capitalist production, both see state solutions to the problem of popular urban disinheritance, a presumptive fallacy that sociologist Sharon Zukin idetifies as “’Etatism’, a perversion of socialism” (1975:231). Mark Purcell's interpretation of Lefevbre, however, entails a withdraw of the State and the placement of power into the hands of urban users, although Lefevbre himself is clear about the necessary role the State must play in this transition (Purcell 2003:101). Purcell, emphasizing the emancipatory aspects of Lefevbre’s theory, centralizes the “urban politics of the inhabitant” over the top-down planning politics of “right to the city” intellectuals (100).

Of course, the city as a critical subject is entirely conceivable outside the framework of these giants of Marxism. Critiquing both the etatism of Lefevbre and Harvey as well as the “vulgarization and domestication” of the “right to the city” concept by NGOs, liberal capitalists, and states, Marcelo Lopez de Souza advocates a soft departure from the “right to the city” argument altogether (2010:316). He desires that researchers and activists examine the multiplicity of radical urban efforts on their own terms, citing the solidarity between the shack dwellers' movement in South Africa and the autonomous slum-based groups in Haiti as a key example of how a more horizontal “molecular” approach offers a more grounded and emancipatory view than the politics of scale of 'Right to the City' movements (322).

Consequently, the Školica program finds itself much more in harmony with the prescriptions of de Souza's critical urbanism rather than Lefevbre's or Harvey's, even if their general critical appraisal of the city must be accepted. However, the departure from the 'Right to the City' movement on the part of Školica is deeper than merely the former's obsession with State intervention; I have not found, in my experience with the program, much evidence of defragmentation to any significant degree. Instead, I have watched the fissures between our children and the ‘white’ citizens of Belgrade deepen and darken more often than not. I have witnessed, instead of defragmentation, conflict and incommensurability. I am not speaking only of conflict between 'the people' and Capital or even the State as generally interpreted, but also a conflict between users. It was not enough that spaces in Belgrade supported us; this did not to erase the fissures that fragmented us from ‘normal’ users, it did not create a homogeneous sense of the urban. Instead, *Školica* appeared to exacerbate cracks in porcelain face of a racializing city. At the same time, I have witnessed positive connections develop between our activities and individuals and collectives around the Belgrade. These have been relations of solidarity, though far from defragmenting the social and urban landscape of Belgrade, have instead cut away from it, forming archipelagos of solidarity with in the city and far beyond it.

The leading literature on the 'Right to the City' is not silent on this issue. Mark Purcell's re-reading of Lefevbre includes a critique of Lefevbre's easy alchemical conversion of city-dwellers into a more-or-less homogeneous working class:

> If inhabitants are imagined to be essentially equivalent to the working class, then their agenda becomes reduced to anti-capitalist resistance. They must challenge the capitalist city rather than challenge, for example, the racist city, the patriarchal city, or the heteronormative city, all of which confront inhabitants in their daily lives. But it is precisely the analytical and political power of the idea of inhabitance that it opens up the definition of the political subject to include a range of different identities and political interests. One’s class and race and gender and sexuality are all fundamental to inhabiting the city. (106)

But Purcell, in situating race and gender as parallel to class instead of looking at them as class relations themselves, that is, as co-constituted exploitative hierarchies, falls into the same inherent etatism as Harvey and Lefevbre. He creates constituencies seeking representation in scalar politics. Purcell's inhabitant is no less fictional than Lefevbre's working class, and the most he manages to advance the process of democratization is by reducing Lefevbre's State-scale to a smaller city-scale. The easy movement of the radical anti-capitalism of Lefevbre into liberal representative democracy of Purcell or the left-democratic franchise of Harvey is supported by the fictive cohesion of users and the politics of scale at the heart of the 'Right to the City'. Koko Lepo has historically exposed this fiction by forming new real connections on its own idealistic terms of solidarity, equality, and autonomy.

One collective member herself became aware of the normalized divisive racism at the heart of Belgrade by becoming an object of the citizen gaze alongside Deponija’s children at a bus stop:

> All the people at the station were like, “What the fuck?” The first time I got that look on me and the kids, I was like, “uaahhhh”, how can we help all these kids and protect them from these awful people? But maybe the worst thing is when they are like “Oh, you are working with Roma people, you are so good!” It’s worse than the “fuck Roma people” look! I appreciate that look more than the, “Oh, you are so great!” look.

So, although a great deal of Koko Lepo's experience with the general public is positive or even comforting, Koko Lepo is sensitive to the boundaries that even those experiences exemplify. A friendly conversation on a bus or a positive interaction between children of the co-constituted-yet-opposed racial identities – at their heart, urban classes – should not be dismissed and are far from irrelevant, even if they are not normative. Even in these instances, however, Koko Lepo collective members feel themselves at odds with the citizenry, as the above quotation illustrates. *Školica* has always been a confrontational act of rupture, and this merely by bringing the wrong kids to the heart of the wrong place – the only home they've ever known – the White City shows its true color.

Biographical profiles of Koko Lepo

The Koko Lepo collective has been a diverse group of personalities from its very inception. While I would have preferred to find a way to weave the biographical trajectories of our adult members directly into the theoretically and historically salient facets of my description, the fact is that membership evolved so quickly over a relatively short period of time that it would be necessary to constantly revise the roster with nearly every paragraph of the section. However, as these personalities continually return to this telling, especially in times of crisis, some basic biographical summaries of key members is in order.

Lena: Lena, in her early 20s, came to Koko Lepo on the invitation of a former member and immediately integrated herself into the organizational dynamics of InexFilm. What Lena most loved about Koko Lepo is that "we were doing what we want" without authoritarianism. Her father is a veteran pilot for the Serbian air force and her mother, despite finishing her faculty in medicine, cleans houses in Belgrade. She was not raised in a nationalistic context and her mother taught tolerance and acceptance of Serbia's gypsy minority, having had numerous Roma friends in Vračar in her youth. Having left the collective on less-than-happy terms after the kindergarten ended, Lena now interns as a journalist for a respected investigative press outlet and, after her experiences with Koko Lepo, identifies as an 'anarcho-communist' despite her former stances against the same. Lena wonders if her father's own anti-authoritarian instincts as a pilot, a man who offered his help with the reconstruction of the kindergarten in the squat, had an effect on her own.

Tanja: Tanja, mid-20s, is the aforementioned prehistorical initiate of Koko Lepo. She is a regular bartender in the more 'hip' drinking circuits in the city. She was a central figure in both InexFilm and the kindergarten and finished her undergraduate degree in sociology during her tenure with Koko Lepo with a focus on Roma education. Tanja has a pronounced sense of ironic humor and social enthusiasm as well as a powerful allergy against political or ideological stances. After the kindergarten, she joined another former member in a failed 'macrobiotic' private kindergarten based in Zemun. She was a constant source of consternation for the anarchists of the squat and the Koko Lepo collective, a fact she herself takes pride in. She reports that her father was a strict authoritarian army officer and credits her reactionary attitude against almost any form of order to his rule. She was an early invitee to the Inex general assembly at the behest of Dejan. She left the collective just before Lena did after the restructuring.

Mara: Mara, in her late 20s, works for an unusually critical NGO in Belgrade focused on minority rights. She takes generally left and anti-authoritarian stances on any given political issue and shows a great deal of sympathy towards anarchist ideals and writers. A large poster of Emma Goldman hangs in her office alongside another of Sophie Scholl. She is an active woman and has participated in organized runs in a number of ex-Yu cities. Mara joined the collective through the *Školica* working group when it still operated out of the infoshop at Inex. She enjoys the respect and admiration of anarchists within the collective and outside of it despite having never herself claimed a specific political affiliation.

Anastasija: Anastasija, in her early 20s, came into Koko Lepo through me, having been a former English student of mine who took an interest in the project. Much of her politics comes from her experience with domestic repression and exploitation in her own family in the Čukarica area of Belgrade. She now studies sociology in Budapest, having abandoned the psychology faculty at the University of Belgrade because she found its disciplinary framework politically irresponsible and incompatible with her experiences in Deponija. Anastasija often found herself overwhelmed by the social weight of her relationships in the slum and brought herself much closer than most into the lives and trust of many of the young women and girls there, but she remained a central member of the collective well through the transitional period. During her time with us, she held jobs in a call center and briefly as a promotions girl in supermarkets in the city.

Jovana: Jovana is rightfully credited with spearheading the *Školica* initiative within Koko Lepo. She works in impressively long spurts of energy and, perhaps because of this, often requires protracted periods of rest from collective organizing. She expresses left anti-authoritarian political positions and has taken part in numerous activist projects around the city, including the No Border collective. Now in her late-30s, Jovana works as a translator for a French firm and teaches French as a private tutor. She has had a profound impact on the residents of *Deponija* and it is impossible to enter or leave the settlement without having to answer a multitude of questions about her whereabouts and well-being.

Miloš Zarić (actual name): Miloš is a 40-something ethnographer who joined the kindergarten collective as a jumping point for his own work on *Deponija* with a specific issues in healthcare and social service integration. He directly intervened in the welfare of many families, helping them to acquire documents and health cards as well as accompanying them on visits to clinics. During his time with us, Miloš worked full-time in his own health food store in the center of the city trying, eventually unsuccessfully, to keep it afloat. He is married and has a son whom he raises in a distinctly non-authoritarian manner. Miloš left the collective before the restructuring to focus on his numerous external obligations. His published work, “Factors of health vulnerability of the Roma children of Deponija”, is dedicated to the “Inex team” and pits the economic tactics of agents in the slum against homogenizing assumptions of a ‘culture of poverty’ approach. We shared many a debate about the role of politics in ethnographic work and I remain indebted to his research assistance in creating my own investigative momentum

Nebojša: Nebojša is in his mid-30’s and joined the collective through me. He was, in fact, my flatmate in Belgrade for two years. Nebojša had become a minor celebrity in Deponija since joining the collective over a year ago and he is a tireless defender of the children’s rights to grow and develop at their own pace. He is an unfailingly sympathetic soul and patiently searches for the potential in each kid, no matter how ruthless or uncontrollable they may sometimes appear to the rest of us. Like many in Belgrade, he works at a call center and often has to endure night shifts, yet he has also proven among the most reliable of the Koko Lepo roster. He has no formal experience in childcare or education and is the only current member of the collective who has never attended university. That said, his ample experience in raising his own much younger siblings and his general preference for direct action over cautious distance has equipped him with an instrumental wisdom that has become indispensable in the collective.

Marko: Marko, just now entering his 30s, is an anarchist with a dual urban citizenship in Belgrade and a post-industrial center of America. He comes from a family of social scientists though he himself has devoted his professional and scholastic attention to film. He is currently completing a documentary on contemporary Roma music and joined Koko Lepo once the *Školica* working group was fully formed. Marko is definitely my closest comrade in Belgrade and we were both members of the Furija infoshop collective in Inex before he joined Koko Lepo. To make ends meet, Marko works as a freelance translator and, in the past, has been a successful film grant recipient. His own colorful youth is reflected in his appreciation of our young friends in Deponija and he has an in-depth understanding of the complex cultural and political history of the Balkans, including of Roma and Muslim groups, which I have found an invaluable resource. He lived in the squat for some time and was set to be my neighbor before the building was abandoned.

Sanja: Sanja was the first to pick up Tanja's call for volunteers for Koko Lepo's original manifestation. She, in her late 20s, is an anarchist feminist who works for a women's crisis hot-line among other activities. Sanja also taught high school civics for a year following her soft-departure from the collective. During her tenure with us, she pioneered a number of anti-authoritarian early education techniques gleaned from various sources, including from a Montessori training course she took on our behalf. She remains an honorary member of the collective despite not having organized with us for over a year.

Nikola: Nikola is an anti-authoritarian punk musician in his early 40s who was a regular fixture in the kindergarten for almost a year. He took principled stands on the political character of the collective yet remained open to dialogue and very critical about what he perceived to be my hard line approach to the apoliticals. He educated himself in programming and web design, moving back to his hometown in Bosnia to finish to his studies and professional training. Nikola authored the Koko Lepo website that has yet to be rolled out. He is a well-read and kind person who has an instinctual rapport with the rowdy children from the settlement. Like Sanja, he remains on the collective's "active list" despite his long absence.

As Gricko has been well profiled in previous sections and Deponija resident and former collective member Đani will be profiled in the following section, I will not include them here. Furthermore, a number of other past members and a couple current ones who do not appear in this dissertation will not be profiled, though the kindergarten was fundamentally bolstered by the hard work and political commitment of many: a teenage radical feminist from a small town in western Serbia, a Chilean anarchist woman with a strong interest in early childhood education who made a deep and lasting impact on the collective's pedagogic philosophy as one of its original members, a Hungarian woman in her late 20s working in youth NGOs, a young Slovenian woman studying forestry in Belgrade, an artist and amateur gymnast in her 30s from New Belgrade, a highly literate autodidact Serb in his early 30s living in the squat, a permaculturalist biology teacher from downtown

Belgrade also in his 30s, a mid-20s Serbian anthropology student working for the city's ethnographic museum, a musician and middle-age father from Belgrade but working in Budapest, a young female socialist university student from Belgrade, as well as any number of temporary comrades from the US, Thailand, Germany, Monaco, and Czechia. We must also, unfortunately, overlook those few but important allies of Gricko's around the time of his expulsion including a young 'macrobiotic' mother from Zemun, a teenage make-up artist and student of linguistics who was working on her bachelor's thesis while at Inex, and an enthusiastic and creative young woman from the Slovenian coast whose photography can be seen throughout this dissertation and who proved instrumental, albeit too late, in the final move against Gricko.

The closure of Inex and the re-making of the collective

The closure of InexFilm prompted a period of inactivity for the collective characterized by a great deal of internal discussion by the now anarchists-dominated group about the organizational future of Koko Lepo. In the end, the kindergarten was abolished as a separate working group and effort was redoubled in the organization of the Školica program. As part of this reconstitution of the collective, the question of membership became all the more vital. The Školica working group, unlike the kindergarten one, consisted primarily of anarchists and those allied to anarchist ideals. We decided not to openly expel the remaining apolitical members of Koko Lepo who had remained occasionally active and part of the online discussion groups where much was organized. Instead they would be presented with a carefully-worded statement of principles and pressed to decide for themselves whether or not they felt like they belonged in the rejuvenated collective. That statement read as follows:

> *The last months have been very dynamic, we had a lot of meetings and opened a number of important issues and we need to share the most important conclusions with all of you.*
>
> *Through every joint activity and discussion, we concluded that it is very important that we have common ground on how to function as a collective.*
>
> *The principles that we believe are extremely important to all of us are gender equality and autonomy in the fight against racism, poverty, exploitation and various forms of discrimination, as well as a critical attitude toward the state and the capitalist system in which we live. In this, solidarity with the collectives that operate on a similar basis in Belgrade and beyond (from alternative space to various autonomous and antifascist projects and anarchist groups) is also important to us because we are not a charity, but a project which is based on the principles of mutual aid and self-organization.*
>
> *One of the most important conclusions from the last meeting is that we agreed that the collective is a single group that organizes a number of different activities. This means that Školica and kindergarten are not two separate groups, but different activities that connects on common point.*

> *Unfortunately, we now lack the capacity to organize kindergarten activities for two reasons: lack of time/active members and a lack of space.*
>
> *Because we work with children outside any formal structure, trust is essential. Not only because of the sensitive nature of what we do together, but because mutual confidence is the functional basis of our collective.*
>
> *Just as collective decisions are made by consensus, we resolve conflicts within our collectivity and openly question problems that arise. In recent months we have managed to create an atmosphere where we feel safe to put-forward and re-evaluate important issues (from internalized racism and sexism to the feeling of "burnout"), and that together we learn and progress. For us to be part of this collective means support and understanding.*
>
> *For all these reasons, we need to know who is an active member of the collective, how each understands their participation, and what responsibilities each is willing to accept (....).*
>
> *For solidarity, autonomy and equality,*
> *KOKO LEPO active collective*

Easily the most cathartic interview I had the pleasure of administering in this research was with Lena. She was a regular subject of conversation in the transitional period after InexFilm and, with reluctant gravity, much of the above letter was written with her in mind. Lena, along with the rest of us, believed that we all shared some basic principles, but understood them in very different ways, and this tension resolved itself in a painful self-severance.

> *Me: So in the end, there was that letter, and then there was that last meeting. You came to that meeting, and I know that you were feeling pushed into a corner, because…*
>
> *Lena: You were* [laughs].
>
> *Me: … that's what I was doing. You were in that corner after a lot of struggles, fighting on facebook, and discussions in person, and then you came to that last meeting. Why? You said at the time that you still weren't sure if you would stay or go.*
>
> *Lena: Yeah… and because it was important. It is important to me now. If we had a kindergarten meeting I would probably show up.*
>
> *Me: So why did you end up leaving?*
>
> *Lena: I don't know – actually, I know. [long pause] I think I realized that we wanted to do things in other ways. It was hard for me to deal with it. To say that "Ok, so maybe you are no longer a part of Koko Lepo". I wasn't that extreme, I wasn't that exclusive in all those values. I wanted them to be shared, but I think we all had the same problem. We were all*

> *questioning everything, everything, everything. Which can be good, but that much questioning paralyses it. “Are we too white?” “Are we racist in another way?” And that’s great, we couldn’t be what we were if we didn’t do that, but maybe we could have been a little stronger as a collective if we weren’t so ‘great’. Why I left? I actually didn’t think my beliefs were strong enough, like yours. ‘Yours’ like ‘the people who stayed’. I think we shared the same values, but maybe you didn’t think so. I don’t know, I rejected something in myself. A lot of times I was on the same side as Tanja, I didn’t have the same opinions as her, but somehow I ended up on the same side. There were like five of you and two of us. That meeting was the hardest… I went out to cry. I don’t think it’s your fault, or anybody else’…*
>
> *Me: … but it is! I made this case as strongly as I could to everyone in the collective, including you. I was very consciously pushing for hardness. I had become convinced at that point that there was a difference between a comrade and a friend and if this was to be a political project we needed comrades and we did not need friends. And I was completely fine at that point with just having no friends at all. There was like a year here where I was like, “I only need comrades right now, I have friends in Budapest, but there I don’t do anything useful, here I do something useful, I need people who are...”*
>
> *Lena: ...”committed.”*
>
> *Me: Yes! I felt bad about it then, I feel bad about it now, but I don’t think anything else could have been done.*
>
> *Lena: I don’t think anything else could have been done either! Maybe now Školica would not exist if it hadn’t been done that way. You all made a hard, but OK decision. Not OK, ‘right’.*
>
> *Me: It didn’t feel right.*
>
> *Lena: Then ‘necessary’. But when it was all over, I didn’t hate everybody. I felt something like ‘betrayed’, it was hard, it was painful, of course, but I wasn’t like “You kicked me out,” It was like, I understood that my place was no longer there.* [Both of us are tearing-up] *Maybe for this kind of thing you need these strong commitments, not my left-liberal shit where everybody’s welcome. Don’t cry, Freddie.* [laughs].

Presently the collective should be considered a genuine affinity group split by neither ideology nor relationships. It does not distinguish between work done "for the children" and work done in the promotion and reproduction of its basic ideals of solidarity, equality, and autonomy. It has engaged in team-building practices, trauma and burnout seminars, and various solidarity events around the world including parties, concerts, and info tours. It continues to strive to break down the class-like distinction between 'teacher' and 'student', eliminating both of those terms in the process, by experimenting with new opportunities for the children to organize themselves. At every turn, the collective's organizational strategies are coupled inexorably with its base ideals and the success and failure of each event is likewise measured against these ideals and, also inexorably, their organizational effects. It is possible, for these reasons, to finally consider the collective organizationally anarchist, even though the collective itself shies from using that particular word in their self-definition.

In this section, I have shown how common-sense organizational hierarchies easily survived, and even thrived, in a microcosmic social formation ostensibly built on anarchist strategies of organizing against hierarchy. Without ideological hegemony, and content to fetishize the organizational form, the existing informal organizational structures at the base of the macrocosmic social order of capitalist Belgrade, the inimical profane, continued to rule. When these organizational principles were finally married to their formative ideals and expressed through direct action, the common sense order of patriarchal apoliticism was successfully challenged and abolished. Koko Lepo's organizational history is a laboratory in the form of an autonomous collective, and I believe it is this laboratory element that is largely lost in David Graeber’s own ethnographic study of a similar group, his Direct Action Network. Graeber claims that consensus-based collectives differ from “sectarian” hierarchical groups in that the former assumes that “a diversity of perspectives is a value in itself” (2009:323). However, pivotal to the formation of an ideal-centered Koko Lepo organizational form was the act of condemnation. Diversity, far from being a value in itself, was rather seen as an open door to the inimical profane. Values *are* connections and actions and there are numerous values which are simply in the way of the kind of rupture and relations Koko Lepo strives to make real. Lena, herself a victim of this principle, affirmed the necessity of such cutting-away in the above interview. She maintains, in contradistinction to Graeber, that this process is compatible with anti-authoritarianism.

Having already expounded upon the symbolically rich webs of significance that expressed the political antagonisms in InexFilm in a previous chapter, I can only emphasize the direct connection between the ways in which actors valued the symbolic weight of particular events, for instance the confrontation at the ‘bikini roller-girls’ party discussed in chapter one, and the way that Koko Lepo created divisions and solidarity within itself. As profane elements were cut away, from the dangerous misogyny of Gricko to the ‘liberal’ inclusivity of Lena and Tanja, the collective condemned the world from which they came with a single voice textured by many vocalists. There is power in organization in two senses: first, the hegemonic power relations of the macrocosm to express themselves in the organization of the microcosm. Secondly, the mode, form, and ideals of an organized collective can serve as a laboratory for testing the limits of that power, as well as producing power in and of itself to push back against those very macrocosmic forces.

[III/B] Solidarnost, autonomnost, i ravnopravnost

For Koko Lepo, values are not merely ideational judgments, but signify specific social connections and concrete practices

Value as condemnations, ideals as relationships: an ethnographic framework

> *I think we all wanted the same thing… to make life easier and better for us and for those kids with us. And we were all trying, maybe it was selfish, I dunno, I still think it was the best thing I did… we were like playing. I never felt like I must do something. I wasn't waking up at six in the morning and thinking "Fuck, I need to go to Koko Lepo!" It was instead "I need to go! I need to go! I need to go! I need to… whatever!" It's snowing, it's raining, it's muddy, but it's OK! You are doing this with these kids. What are you doing? You're picking them up, spending time with them, talking to them, and then taking them home. But we all wanted to show ourselves and to show these kids that there is a different world.* - Lena in interview

This section will establish the concretion of the "solidarity, autonomy, and equality" value structure of the Koko Lepo collective. The subject of values has lost little traction since Durkheim's claim that they are constituted by "*sui generis* realities", simultaneously external to the social subject and internalized by them (2010:42). They are "estimated...from the relation between reality and...ideals", they judge the trajectory of an act between those two fixed points or an objects relationship to them. A fine place to start, but as ideals are conceived of by Durkheim as "the ideas in terms of which society sees itself and exists at a culminating point in its development", how should we examine a collective like Koko Lepo that uses ideals *as* values? Anarchistic groups are partially defined by their creation of the future in the present through organizing tactics and "direct action", acting as though the world is already capable of its ideals in the present and making them real by immediate and constant practice of them (Graeber 2007). Anarchists collapse values and ideals into acts, and here Durkheim's opening salvo falls far short of hitting its mark. In this section, I look to a diverse but compact set of ethnographers working in the area of value, sacrifice, and incommensurability to build a cohesive framework from which to approach the *problematique* of value in the Koko Lepo collective and unveil the sacred space created from it.

Jumping a century past Durkheim's value sociology, David Graeber, no stranger to direct action, having literally written the book on it as far as ethnography is concerned, brings us much closer in his own ambitious work on value. He effectively establishes the troublesome slipperiness of the value concept in ethnography, citing Kluckholn’s ethnographic opus on the Pueblo region where the mass of ethnological comparative data coalesced into the simple and somehow unsatisfying declaration that values are “what human beings have a right to expect from each other and the gods” (1949:358 cited in Graeber 2001:4)). Graeber then compares the complex interpretive ventures by Marilyn Strathern and Nancy Munn in Melanesia, each showing how people are themselves expressed by value in exchanges. Between these ethnographic figures and Karl Marx, amateur ethnologist in his own right, Graeber finds a “common denominator” in the “relative distribution” of “an investment of human time and energy” (45). Whereas Strathern's work on pig exchange and the extraction of value as a reflection of the relation between the two parties “makes visible” the relational heart of value, a parallel process to Marx's defetishizig the commodity by attending to the class relations of production, Munn's connection of the Kula ring to the control of “spacetime” through largess speaks specifically to the potential of actions and, indeed, of human beings themselves hidden in the value of objects, a process that dovetails with the idea of socially necessary labor time at the heart of the labor theory of value.

Graeber's concept of the “mode of production of people” operates as the practical point where these seemingly disparate approaches to value meet (2006). He claims that all production, capitalist or otherwise, is in fact geared towards the reproduction of human beings and relationships. While there is nothing particularly novel in this approach[56], Graeber's principle contribution, in my view, is deformalizing Marxist and ethnographic treatments of value so that one can be easily found in the other. Graeber's offerings do not amount to high theory, a goal he has never claimed to have anyway, but they do open up extremely productive lines of inquiry into the value problem. He unites Terrence Turner's attention to tokens of value, which materialize and express the importance of the relations and acts hidden behind them, to Marx's attention to the money commodity and reaffirms the common grounding of both. Value is shared, it creates equivalence, it conceals acts and relations, and it has creative power (2012). It is this last point that enables the study of value to intersect with 'anarchist' direct action, and, as I have similarly discovered, Edmund Leach's writings on ritual have much to offer. Leach's assertion that society itself occurs in ritual acts, echoed by Katherine Bell in the first chapter of this dissertation, mutates in Graeber's epistemology to the claim that “political struggle is and must always be about the meaning of life”, an assertion that the entire spectrum of symbolic/interpretive anthropology from Geertz to Turner to Douglas to Gluckman[57] would certainly support. Thus, in my mind, Graeber's principal contribution is the resuscitation of the symbolic/interpretive approach to value from the crypt of postmodernity and its deliverance into critical anthropology.

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[56] Elsewhere I have compared this concept to James Scott's “Gross Human Product” (Schulze 2013).

[57] Particularly Gluckman, as he writes, “conflicts in one set of relationships lead to the establishment of cohesion in a wider set of relationships”, explaining the political fragmentation of the Zulu and its contribution to the formation of the White South African state (Gluckman 1965:164). This is essentially identical to Koko Lepo’s own theory of solidarity.

That said, as an activist, David Graeber finds himself, alongside David Harvey, swept up by the tides of mass mobilization. He celebrates the anti-globalization movement, Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, etc., as it supports the veracity of his career claim: capitalism and the state are more fragile than they want us to think, and that people, perhaps 'the people', desire to rule themselves. Thus, it should be no surprise that Graeber's anthropology should be built around the search for common denominators. It is here that his approach to value overshoots the same target that Durkheim fell short of hitting a century ago. I share Natalia Buier's critique of Graeber that his willingness to include almost anyone connected by base ideals of freedom and equality in the anarchist tent, “an ideology of the diversity of ideologies”, limits any serious anthropological study of anarchism to “the terms of the conversation as set up by the critics of anarchism” (Buier 2014). By contrast, I present anarchism, not as a rising tide of commonality threatening to flood the shores of capitalism, but rather as a vast archipelago carved from distinction and rejection where actions and memories flow from microcosmic island to microcosmic island. Like Kula Ring in Munn's ethnography, actions and memories pass over established-yet-expanding trade routes; tactics, stories, and epistemologies settle and grow in value before being passed along to the next collective laboratory. Mine is an anarchist ethnography of carving-out and connecting, not of spreading out and unifying.

Allow me to provide a concrete example of this flow that occurred during my field period in Belgrade:

At the beginning of the summer in 2015, the anarchists of Belgrade were moldering in the state of disarray. No new spaces had been claimed and one could hear a common lament at the lack of initiative to occupy new spaces in any sustained fashion. Activities continued, however, much as they had before with discussions, concerts, food events, etc., but these were held in a variety of allied spaces from the general left and NGO world. At one such event, a discussion led by members of the CrimethInc. collective from North Carolina promoting their newest text, an international and crusty band of older punks from Hamburg had stopped by with news. A few days ago, they had taken it upon themselves to squat an abandoned former bar in the heart of the reviled Belgrade waterfront development project in the center of the city. Using sturdy nylon sheeting, a generator, a gas stove, and various other implements, they had opened a "No Border Hostel" to shelter refugees sleeping in the parks. The Hamburgers explained that they were on their way back home, and wanted to bequeath this operation to the anarchists of Belgrade, including members of Koko Lepo like myself. This proved to be a much-needed jolt of energy and initiative in the local scene. But how does this one event reveal the living archipelago that I have alluded to above?

We can begin with Hamburg; like many German cities, Hamburg possesses an anarchistic microcosm made of anarchistic microcosms, otherwise known as a “scene”. A vibrant 'house project' scene, intentional living spaces with activist social functions, with its roots in squatting is a durable part of the underground landscape of this ornate and affluent trading port on the North Sea. Here, unique relations have developed between the collective laboratories of this landscape and the macrocosmic encompassing efforts of the German state, resulting in unique forms of bargaining where the state's desire for legibility led to a historic compromise with the anarchists desire for autonomy; this is the house project, an often well-equipped and well-funded alternative living arrangement. As refugees from North Africa and the Middle East, as well as everywhere else, press into the German political economic system, anarchists from that system press outwards towards Greece. The small village of Idomeni has, since at least 2014, become the a major center for autonomous refugee solidarity in Europe. With tactics and equipment developed in the organizational microcosmic laboratories of their Hamburg house project, the crust punks transposed their repertoire of value-as-onto the chaotic police-ruled forests of the Greek village where thousands of refugees congregate. Here, they found themselves joined with innumerable other laboratories all working on redefining the nature of solidarity and condemnation through inventive, and sometimes aggressive, forms of direct action and autonomous organization.

As police repression was unusually high at the same time as support efforts had successfully saturated the scene, largely coming from Germany, our Hamburg anarchists decided to disarticulate their laboratory and return home with an eye to finding potential opportunities for intervention along the way. Belgrade proved to be just such a space. By setting up the “No Border Hostel” in Belgrade and tapping into the flow of ongoing anarchist activity in the city, including many members from Koko Lepo, three general microcosmic laboratories were thus united as discrete operations within a fourth. Thus, the Hamburg direct action *archipelag-ized* numerous experimental islands through the creation of a novel laboratory. This nascent microcosm had a reverberating effect on the Belgrade island of anarchism. New collectives were formed involving new participants from a wholly separate German scene, as well as border-crossers themselves, accustomed to defying the State merely by dint of their passage and whose habit of direct action appeared to the locals as both well-honed and instinctual. After the hostel was destroyed, reportedly by the city mayor, Siniša Mali, after two nights of violence featuring masked thugs and bulldozers[58], German participants in the squat united with local Belgrade anarchists to form a new squat, an abandoned movie theater in the center of town. In its first months of operations, it hosted active anti-authoritarians from numerous scenes around Europe and beyond: yet another island in the boundless, mass-less anarchist archipelago. Anarchism is not the sea of mass movement, it is the experimental political economy of pirate ships and havens upon it.

So, returning to the theoretical foundations of the Koko Lepo value project, “value” in anarchist ethnography certainly does conform in most ways to Graeber's prescription; it does “create universes” by pulling together otherwise disparate acts, objects and relationships over particular equivalencies, but, and here is where Leach becomes particularly salient, anarchist values must, at all times, condemn and sever. They divide and connect, they do not grow and encompass. David Graeber's key political subject, the democratically-inclined masses who “are already communist” (2009) simply does not exist for anarchist anthropology, nor should it. Anarchism exists, not in the underlying shared principles of its suggested reading list, but in the limits and inventions of its moments of confrontation against the hegemonic claim to these principles. It is because of the confrontational, networked nature of anarchist value-as-practice-as-collective that means we must amend Graeber's assertion, via Terrence Turner, that a society is identifiable by its actors’ willingness to accept forms of value (2006:73); we must take seriously the role of condemnation in that formalization. The form of value is a necessary but insufficient basis for an ethnographic

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[58] As reported by the investigative journalism outlet *Krik*.

approach to anarchist collectivity; conflict and condemnation endemic in the process of valuation must guide any such investigation to fully account for a collective's trajectory and organizational choices.

In the specific case of Koko Lepo, were we to attend only to its stated value of “solidarity”, we may say with confidence that their most immediate parallel organization in the NGO world of *Deponija*, the *Centar Integracije Mladosta* (CIM) Roma youth support program, exhibits just as much concern and shows just as much esteem towards solidarity as Koko Lepo does, yet Koko Lepo was, in part, formed as a counter-movement against that very organization. Certainly, we can support Graeber's above assertion still by drawing attention to the difference in the form that this value takes, i.e. its expression as client service in CIM and that of, for instance, spatial piracy in Koko Lepo's. However, Koko Lepo does more than merely offer a different form of a value, it denies the very applicability of this value to CIM itself as an expression of the profanity at the basis of capitalism and its constitutive class basis. It is not that CIM is “doing it wrong”, though many of us have criticisms of their methods, it is that the NGO represents a formalized collaboration with the same forces that created the precarity of *Deponija* in the first place, or as Lena puts it, “the people that make our kids live in mud”. I must emphasize that, on a personal note, the individuals of Koko Lepo that have had dealings with CIM hold no *personal* contempt for those involved and, in fact, genuinely admire the sentiment at the base of the organization. However, Koko Lepo as a collective laboratory, *as a set of values which are themselves acts and relations*, must at all times maintain a systematic condemnation of the NGO as a carrier of the macrocosmic disease. Koko Lepo shares with CIM a desire to create equality, solidarity, and autonomy among the Roma youth of Belgrade, but whereas CIM might allow itself to see some of its own mission in the activities of Koko Lepo as a constituent element of the encompassing nature of the State (Bourdieu 1984, Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Mitchell 2006, Scott 2012), Koko Lepo seeks only distance from CIM. Values, even in a state of equivalency, sever and condemn; they are the sacred acts and relationships that maintain sterility in the laboratory of the anarchist collective and a sense of directionality in its evolution.

Responding to my inquiry about her appraisal of Koko Lepo from the perspective of someone from the NGO world, collective member Mara replied:

> *What struck me was the fact that I saw in the best light how horizontal organization can function and the fact of how much good could be done if you do not have anyone breathing down your neck. I soon figured out that I give myself more in this story because I'm free to decide how much I want to be here and how much I want to give myself and how. I immediately fell in love with the kids, but the idea and the concept of the collective is something that has always been close to me.*

Mara found herself disillusioned by the NGO world which, despite the fact that her own office was internally organized horizontally, “it all depends on donors and what they need”. It would be hard to find a more radically-minded NGO in Belgrade, yet its limits are clearly built into its structural dependency on the distinct hierarchy of a classed society. Koko Lepo, for Mara, was liberating.

Yet we must go further. As Graeber is apt to remind us, direct action, the basis of Koko Lepo's activity as much as any other 'anarchist' group, is as much about creation as it is rejection. This is the sacrificial crux, so to speak, of Koko Lepo's central values. As I will elaborate in the following sections, to act these values within the parameters established by Koko Lepo's tripartite frame of autonomy, solidarity, and equality means to give-up or seriously threaten extant relations, potential sources of reproduction, and stability. Having rejected these things as contaminated by the inimical profane in the claiming and maintenance of these value-acts, each of these losses must be remade anew. Thus, radical collectives are also about beginning. Here, Michael Lambeck's inestimable contribution to the anthropology of sacrifice becomes quite salient. Unsatisfied with the classic approach to ritual as immortalized by Victor Turner, Lambeck found in the passage through liminality to recapitulation nothing but a self-affirming theater with little potential for movement or change. When he re-centered agency in ritual activity, Lambeck discovered that the basis of ritual, especially that of sacrifice, was not recapitulation, but rather beginning. The “resoluteness of initiating action” lay at the heart of ritual and offers new import to the weight of sacrificial activity (2007). Finally, Leach's sacrifice as the bridge to the “Other world of experienced reversed” might be seen, not as an endpoint or an escape from “This World of temporal experience” (1976:82), but as a radical break imbued with definitive political agency. This allows an important qualitative advance on Graeber's epistemology of value; “bringing universes into being” is a painful and disruptive act replete with suffering, austerity, and loss. Solidarity, as Koko Lepo conceives of it, is found among its members and its participants in the settlement in moments of cutting away existing relationships and forming new ones in shared acts of struggle, a process seen in my interview with Lena in the previous section.

Finally, value in Koko Lepo cannot be fully grasped without attending to the fact of incommensurability. Caroline Humphrey asserts that those invisible, illegible, and immeasurable elements of culturally discrete groups subjected to a system of scalar government must not be dismissed as meaningless cultural flotsam, but should instead be seen as carriers of incommensurability (303). This is the anthropological equivalent of the astrophysicist discovering that the supposedly empty space between stars is in fact replete with dark matter. The stake in the maintenance of such elements is the manipulation of 'equality'. Humphrey notes that social groups are apt to oscillate between expressions of comparability and incommensurability: the latter permitting critical complaints about inequality and the former preventing the application of the hegemonic understanding of inequality through hierarchy (ibid.).

I have already mentioned the key presence of equality in the Koko Lepo value trinity and suggested that its expression is not only unlike that of the hegemonic macrocosm, but in fact distinguishes them from that macrocosm and allows for uniquely sacred practices therein. In unpacking this idea, I have found inspiration in Humphrey's longtime ethnographic work in Russia where she revealed the basis for social inequality hidden by the widely shared value of *spravedlivost*, justice and fairness, as an alternately “ethical and critical practice” (2015:319). She boldly applies the logic of totemism to contemporary Russian political culture and claims that the historical plasticity of totems is explainable if we view them as reactions against the ordering systems of encompassing agents like the State. They are tools against hierarchy in a broad political-economic sense as well as internally. Humphrey elaborates:

> Conceptualizing human groups or individuals as innately different from one another has to be the ultimate weapon against any ideology that would hierarchize all groups in relation to a quality they hold in common. (321)

Humphrey acknowledges the potential for incommensurability to work against the marginal as well; dominant groups can employ the same weaponry to deny the subjugation of an Other even as they practice it (308). By bringing in the value of *spravedlivost* as it is negotiated in post '91 Russia, she presents a divided Russia where the totemistic hierarchy of Soviet-era “estates” – public service, consumer service, and state dependents – created a chaotic loss of value order (310,311). The incommensurabliity between what engenders *spravedlivost* in the market and what it meant for the estate system has unpredictable effects on labor and labor contention. Thus, it is possible for outsiders to entice certain clades of Russian labor into performing services to which they would be loathe to stoop for fellow Russians (313). This formulation should ring familiar following chapter two’s discussion on race and labor value. Thus, Humphrey concludes that, “we have to see incommensurability for what it is, a use of difference to construct non-intelligibility, and to notice that it can be punctured in many ways” (316). Koko Lepo, perhaps having somewhat totemized value themselves, have built a constructive system that permits, in one moment, a critical attack on claims to these values by the macrocosmic order in which it is encompassed, and at other times a retreat from that order behind a reactive barrier of incommensurability.

Between Graeber, Lambeck, Leach, and Humphrey we begin to approximate a coherent framework for ethnographically approaching Koko Lepo as value-based collective. The collective's values establish a universe of measurement wherein creative experimentation in a novel social form can occur relatively autonomously from the capitalist state and its class-basis. Furthermore, the establishment of said universe is a painful process of direct and “resolute” agency where the macrocosmic society in which it is born is not escaped, but condemned as profane through determined and willful acts of severance. Thus, despite multiple collective members both past and present coming from the world of NGOs, they willfully leave that world behind when they enter the sacred organizational space of Koko Lepo. Everyone in the collective has a perfectly legible ‘day job’ that reproduces normative hierarchies, exploitative relationships, and private systems of power, yet we all carve time and space out of our lives for practices completely inimical to our quotidian means of personal reproduction.

Solidarity, Equality, and Autonomy: case specifics

As stated, Koko Lepo centralizes three key values: solidarity, equality, and autonomy. I have intimated that the way in which Koko Lepo conceives of these values is specific and born from internal struggles in their historical development. That said, there is nothing particularly unique in these values, their combination, or their specific understandings. It would be fair to say that, taken as an assemblage, these values resemble something like ideal type anarchism. It would also be fair to say, however, that these ideals and their combination are probably considered unassailable by the general population of Belgrade. Few in Belgrade would argue the importance of displaying solidarity with those having a rough time or those fighting a fight that one believes in but cannot join. Few would argue that it is better to be possessed and controlled than to the independent and working for something they value autonomously. Few would argue, apart from those neoliberal abominations descended from Milton Friedman and Margaret Thatcher, that people in Belgrade should show a basic amount of respect to each other and that society should strive for equality. It is tempting to argue, as Peter Marshall and David Graeber have in the past, that the ubiquity of these values is evidence of the natural anarchism that is our species birthright, but I will not be making that argument here. Certainly, one who calls for national autonomy, justice and equity for the white race, and solidarity for those struggling against Islamification or immigration should not be confused with those maintaining anarchist or communist sensibilities. The anarchism, as it were, of Koko Lepo does not come merely from its values, but from the juxtaposition of these values as they conceive of them and the world around them, established through concrete practices and relationships. Thus, despite having centralized a set of values that can be easily found in greater Belgrade society, Koko Lepo stands apart as a community of intervention that knows itself through its action and reflects upon itself through its shared memories and symbols.

In fact, it is the shared legibility of these values within the general culture of Belgrade that provides Koko Lepo with the ability to condemn that very culture. By centralizing the aforementioned ideals and creating concrete relationships from them, Koko Lepo exposes the boundaries of culture and identity in Belgrade as the critical junctions of class struggle. One may speak and act freely in the equal, autonomous, and solidarity-based relationships of any number of people or groups in Belgrade, but when these same values shape relations or activities between the people of the White City and the people of *Deponija*, the corporeal and spatial limits of these ideals are revealed in their inability to account for relations between the Serb *beograđanin* and the ‘gypsy’ collector. The key marker of this class relationship is the proliferation of cultural 'facts' about those just outside the realm of ideological applicability. "Gypsies don't want to go to school!", equality cannot apply to them. "Gypsies are criminals!", how can one show solidarity to those who willingly break the social contract? "Gypsies are a parasite on the social welfare system!", we cannot speak of autonomy with those who do not value it themselves. Yet, under the same banners, Koko Lepo has created and continues to create concrete relationships and shared activities tying the *Deponija* ghetto to the city and thereby severing “this world of temporal experience” from the world of ideals it portends to host. The disruption so often invoked by Koko Lepo’s urban excursions is Bataille’s “immanent violence” *in vivo*, distinguishable from identity-based violence at Inex ‘*in vitro*’ discussed in the previous chapter. It unmasks the transcendence of Belgrade from capitalism as “transcendent violence”, replacing it in the moment with its immanent antipode.

Furthermore, regular practices of direct action, informality, and illegibility empower Koko Lepo, through its assemblage of values, to condemn the political hegemony of liberal aid in capitalist Belgrade. While NGOs and droves of well-meaning citizens might superficially share Koko Lepo's tripartite value structure, they find Koko Lepo's practices incompatible with their own. This has immediate consequences for the internal structure of the collective as well. For instance, one member of Koko Lepo slowly phased herself out of the collective after expressing concern over our general ban on calling the police. The group's refusal to attain official status, tax ID, or participate in record-keeping automatically disqualifies it from NGO aid even if the collective was willing to accept it. This essentially repudiates NGO hegemony over the practice of aid and implicitly argues against the inevitability of the entire NGO model of charitable intervention. Much as the concrete relationships forged between *Deponija* and Belgrade through Koko Lepo demystify the cultural framework of Serbian citizens' understanding of 'gypsies', exposing it as a class relationship, the relationship of Koko Lepo to the state and the market removes Koko Lepo from the liberal continuum. The State, whether represented by cops or NGOs, is tacitly condemned as impotent at best and complicit at worst in the ongoing frustration of ideals of equality, solidarity, and autonomy in their relationship to *Deponija*.

Marilyn Straethern established an inexorable linkage between value and 'hidden relationships', implying, in fact, that they are one and same. I would argue that this linkage extends beyond 'value' as a mode of evaluation to 'values' as guiding principles. They are not simply utopian proclamations, but are representations of specific historical relationships and actions as well as being models of action themselves. I would again refer to Clifford Geertz here and emphasize the shared nature of these representations; I am not inventing these linkages and models for the sake of my narrative, they are constantly employed and traded within the collective as well as between the collective, Deponija, and Belgrade. I have already shown how Koko Lepo rejects the basis of macrocosmic culture as implicated in the conditions of Deponija, revealed by the juxtaposition of otherwise uncontroversial values onto irreconcilable relations. Similarly, I have also shown the relation of condemnation between Koko Lepo and the liberal expressions of aid in Belgrade through the juxtaposition of those same values onto irreconcilable organizational practices. For Koko Lepo, these values are not 'something to strive toward' but are the immediate concrete bases of a total rejection of This World. Kluckholn claims, again, that values are what we can expect from each other, yet for Koko Lepo, autonomy, solidarity, and equality are quite the opposite; This World can never be expected to provide such relationships, so another world is necessary. This position supports Graeber's claim that values "bring universes into being", but I would re-emphasize the negative quality of values as knives which sever and, in severing, condemn. Shared values or their symbolic representations do not a community make; practices of exclusion, confrontation, and rejection are just as necessary.

I will show, through five detailed episodes, how values supposedly shared by Koko Lepo and Inex, Belgrade, and the settlement were employed as tools of severance and as direct creators of concrete relationships. The logic of sacrifice weighs heavily throughout in moments of the dangerous agency "of beginning", following Lambek. Keeping in mind the processes outlined in chapter one, the reader should attend to those key moments where people, relations, and even worlds are cut away and condemned, moments where seemingly aggressive, cruel, or stupid acts develop the air of the sacred as politics reluctantly come into being.

[1] Koko Lepo feels sold out: autonomy condemns representation and liberal inclusivity

In March of 2015, as the owner and his family grew increasingly interested in reclaiming InexFilm, the secretary of the owner came to Inex with the intention of choosing a room to house the Jasmin corporation's extra materials. At this point, Inex meetings were attended almost exclusively by the cultural elements of the squat; the 'anarchists' had stopped regularly attending some time earlier when the utter irreconcilability of their project and that of the cultural element became impossible to ignore any longer. They did continue to show up in times of great squat-wide confusion and upheaval, however, as a matter of self-defense. Apparently, a meeting took place without anarchist participation where it was decided that the owner had every right to use the space, as it was legally his after all. His secretary would be presented with a few suitable rooms for her perusal, among these was the kindergarten. A few apolitical agents of Inex who were still a part of the Koko Lepo collective despite the intensifying ‘anarchist’ turn of the group, informed the rest of the collective that the kindergarten space was under consideration. On her own accord, the secretary decided against taking the space despite it being her first choice on the grounds that she did not want to be responsible for evicting the kindergarten. To several of us in the collective, this decision was juxtaposed against Lena and Tanja’s apparent willingness to allow the it to be considered, a willingness that Lena later refuted in interview; we were incensed and announced our dissatisfaction clearly to both.

The manner in which the information about this decision was related to Koko Lepo proved problematic to the rest of the collective and was objected to on a few fronts. Firstly, the claim that the owner had to the space was rejected outright; Koko Lepo had a moral claim to the space that trumped any legal imposition from the outside. Legality in general was a logic that the 'anarchists' of the collective regularly argued against adopting. Secondly, the ability of the InexFilm general meeting to interfere in the affairs of Koko Lepo was likewise rejected. The interests of the apolitical mandate therein were held to be fully at odds with those of the collective. Finally, the rejection of the authority of the general meeting also entailed a dismissal of the idea that Koko Lepo could be represented inside that structure as a constituent part, though members of Koko Lepo would continue to attend for the purpose of attaining and sharing information. The ability of one member to represent the whole of the collective, however, was denied. Such meetings were rarely conducive to the purposes of information gathering or sharing, as one member reported after a meeting following the decision to give the hangar space to the owner:

Illustration 20: Students lead a calendar lesson

> *This discussion was long and very aggressive (Đura tried to get in a fight twice) as some people like: [names four cultural participants] are against the library because they consider that it is spreading of "anarchist influence in Inex"...Kindergarten was mentioned twice: first Đura said that it is anarchist kindergarten. Of course, I clearly explained that it is not true. Then X.X. said that she heard from Y.Y. that people in kindergarten are getting paranoid about people from Inex. Again, I explained why and how this is not true.*

Thus, 'autonomy' was made concrete through the severing and condemnation of the law, property, and the representative system of governance and 'black-baiting' masked as consensus in the general meetings of the squat. The reaction from those who still valued the general meeting was predictably negative:

> Tanja:
> *I am the only one under scrutiny because I am the only one who believes in the Inex collective!*
>
> Nikola:
> *And you don't believe in the Koko Lepo Collective?*
>
> Tanja:
> *My confidence is shaken because no one tries to understand me, but they punish me for every mistake.*

Tanja complained that the anarchist element were privileging values over people and fomenting an environment of militancy at the expense of the children, a formulation mirroring that of the apoliticians and reactionary ‘artists’ cited in the above meeting:

> *I accuse anarchists in the kindergarten of putting their values, and I'm not talking about "basic anti-s", but the value of being a soldier on their team...before the actual kindergarten, and by 'kindergarten' i mean kids.*

This set-off an unexpected debate with those whose ideals are most in-line with general anarchism claiming that the kindergarten was *not* an anarchist program against the claims of the ‘anti-ideology’ members arguing that it was:

> Lena:
> *I am glad that we have agreed that the group does not have to agree with what individuals say in a meeting, since I disagree with the fact that the kindergarten is not anarchist, I.E. does not strive to be an anarchist. Also, I do not think that the kindergarten should be for anarchist propaganda, but we've already established that.*
>
> Nikola:
> *I do not agree* [with Lena] *that the kindergarten is anarchist. It has a base that can be easily read in anarchist key terms (solidarity, mutual aid, self-organization), but the people in it do not want to organize themselves as an anarchist kindergarten, they do not want to use it as an anarchist propaganda weapon, nor has it been by most of the anarchists. This is my impression.*
>
> Jovana:
> *Kindergarten has at least 30 members who do not identify themselves as anarchists* [referring here to the students]. *Also, the kindergarten has the support of anarchist collective. For me this is a clear fact.*

Much of the setup for this debate occurred about a week earlier when I strongly suggested that no-one should be communicating on a friendly or productive basis with Đura. He had said on several occasions that he wanted the kindergarten closed, participated in a petition to allow private security to purge the squat of 'anarchists', and has physically attacked some of our parents when they came looking for their daughter. On top of this, he had been quite vocal about the uselessness of “helping those people”, meaning gypsies, because he believed their culture to be one of waste and idleness. Claiming, as he was, to be supportive of the squat and alternative culture whilst rejecting that it was a squat at all and promoting the profane culture of the macrocosm, many of us 'anarchist'-types had decided that he had to be cut away from our activities as much as was possible. Lena objected:

> *Right here it can be seen how different our ideologies are. My opinion is that talking much more to those who do not share the same values as we do is necessary, to let them try to explain their ideals and values and not necessarily make them think just like you. Every time you tugged at this question, we finish with you thinking that anyone who does not think exactly like you must be banned, removed from this area and so on. But my opinion is that then you are no different than they are. I do not want to sound as if I'm speaking to only Freddie. I'm talking to everyone, and by 'you' I mean those who think like him and it was obvious that there are many with him in kindergarten and I'm in the minority. In my opinion, nothing is achieved by censorship and exclusion. Rather, we should be trying to change people by showing they're wrong THROUGH EXPLANATION, NOT VIOLENCE* [emphasis in original – probably in reference to the party crashed by the anarchists, recounted in a previous section].

Calls for severance and a practical commitment to autonomy, in this case realized by the rejection of the general meeting and a ban on the cultural-users participating in it who reflected hegemonic racism, sexism, etc., was irreconcilable with the hegemonic understanding of inclusivity in Lena’s “left-liberalism”. The cutting away of these elements was felt quite personally by the members of the Koko Lepo collective who considered themselves apolitical or anti-ideology. Some, like Tanja, took it as an attack on their character. This is only understandable if one sees the practice of autonomy through the rejection of the general meeting, the ownership of the property, and users propagating vehement apoliticism from the point of view of sacrifice. Profanities all, these elements were to be cut away, thus condemning the very world from which they rose, a world the cultural-users of the kindergarten collective saw as natural and reasonable. Indeed, these debates and confrontations proved the existence of a political ideology its adherents claimed did not exist. These values, to quote Straethern, made visible the relations underpinning the 'normal' function of the squat as relations of struggle and incompatibility, thus condemning their presence in the kindergarten collective as dangerous. Autonomy congealed in shared memories of acts and relations which, in the manner of Geertz and Douglas, became a model for the collective itself and its place in the world.

Lena would be the last of the apoliticians to leave Koko Lepo. Before her, another foundational member would be yelled out of a meeting under accusations of racism and showing a lack of solidarity with the Infoshop and Tanja would simply stop showing up by the end of spring; Lena would not commit to her departure until the statement of principles cited at-length was finally published and circulated between all past Koko Lepo members. She continued to argue for equality through representation, the right to speak unmolested, and to reject exclusive activities to the bitter end.

[2] Solidarity through theft: destroying space, creating equals

In Linebaugh and Rediker's revolutionary history of the Atlantic, they briefly though significantly centralize a little bar on the docks of early 18th century New York City called Hughson's Tavern. In its smoky salons mingled various clades of maritime proletarians and slaves bent over in conspiracy or cavorting in multi-ethnic and multilingual bacchanal. Here revolutions were imagined and communism seemed firmly in reach (2013:174-176). Hughston's spirit surely haunted Inex on the night of May 24th, 2015.

“Fuck the borders,” shouted guitar player of Canadian punk band The Dead Peasants Revolt as a half dozen young men from the settlement break-danced and hooted in support[59], “and fuck capitalism!” There cannot not be many places in this world where one can find 'gypsy' collectors freestyle rapping, dancing, and drumming between touring punk acts. Before them was a Serbian band from Novi Sad named Lazarath after an Albanian village that once subsisted entirely and autonomously from growing and selling marijuana before it was attacked by the state. In open defiance of Serb nationalist sentiments, Lazarath employs the Albanian national symbol in its merchandise and promotional materials.

In the infoshop one room over, 'gypsies' and 'punks' chatted together under the Furija collective's definitively, though half-ironically, satanic pentagram mural as they rolled cigarettes between bouts of breakdancing and jumping to the abrasive music in the club. Directly above them, the 'cultural-users' were holding an emergency meeting in the lounge presumably to discuss how to deal with the unruly anarchists below. Participants included allied members of the Inex theater as well as members of the reactionary opposition that would later form the 'Artist Collective', discussed in the previous chapter.

Many in the meeting were in a state of panic, much to the delight of the 'social' half of the squat, because only two nights prior after yet another anarchist punk show ended in an hour-long ‘gypsy’ freestyle rap performance, the members of the Koko Lepo collective claimed a room for themselves and the social users in the squat to act as a new storage room. Unfortunately, this room was already being used as a storage room by select members of the 'cultural organizers'. Koko Lepo had been promised it months prior when the an artist and her Romantic partner, the latter the aforementioned Đura, who used to inhabit it instead enclosed a new room for themselves from the common guest room upstairs, but consistently refused to relinquish control over the old unused space, apprently to spite the collective. It moldered without purpose for some months before eventually becoming a default storage room for their allies. Finally, the members of Koko Lepo had decided to take direct action. A contingent went upstairs to confront the dreaded duo late in the night and, when the groggy pair refused to communicate, the Koko Lepo collective broke the lock from the door and attached their own in full and helpless view of the enraged couple.

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[59] It is unclear whether these men understood the sentiments literally or merely supported the emotional energy of the band. Many in the settlement speak some English,

Đura had allegedly attacked one of the fathers of our kindergarten children that autumn. That father, and six of his friends, was one of the rappers performing down the hall that very night. As Nenad stomped out of the squat, presumably to find something suitable for the “...or else” he had lobbed at the Koko Lepo collective as they were attempting to put a new chain on his old door, it was explained to our guests from *Deponija* what was going on and exactly whose room we were occupying. This news was met with alacritous support and cries of “Koko Lepo!” filled the cement corridor as sparkling wine popped open and was passed around among the teachers and the settlement residents in attendance, who politely held it without imbibing.

The ‘cultural’ side of the squat was shocked. One of the cultural-users, Ana from ‘the aluminum can incident’, called it a “violent and brutal act” and a resident DJ who once lamented that no one ever asked him if he was comfortable with gypsies in the squat complained that the kindergarten collective “steals a room and then brings gypsies to protect them”. A sympathetic member of the theater collective who became bored with the emergency meeting of the cultural organizers and wandered downstairs poked fun at me for “making shit again” before going on to cheer on the acrobatics of the settlement residents in the raucous punk concert.

This weekend marked a moment long awaited by the anarchistic element of Koko Lepo and their infoshop allies and long dreaded by the leadership of the ‘cultural users’ upstairs: a significant portion of the settlement had begun to use Inex not merely as a service or as an occasional source of aid, but in the way the ‘Whites’ of the city do: as a space of recreation, creative expression, and camaraderie. Moreover, as the boys from the settlement walked by the donation box at the entrance without even a passing thought of putting something into it, they made it clear that this was somehow even more their space than it was the other visitors'. This event had a dual effect: first, it marked the claiming of Inex by the 'community', incoherent as it may be, of the slum as a part of their world as a potential space of equality and not merely as a service offered. Secondly, this intensified the settlement itself as an integral part of Inex's own sense of the sacred as it spent its final year in contradistinction to and condemnation of the macrocosmic profane surrounding it.

The space itself, however, never managed to become a functioning storage room for the kindergarten. The cultural users abandoned the building shortly thereafter and the kindergarten embarked on a doomed remodeling mission. For a month prior to their departure, however, the new storage space was a contested ground. Đura’s allies were afraid to keep too much in it for fear of it being stolen by the anarchists and kindergarten collective again. In essence, the space was destroyed for the remainder of the ‘war’. Thus far, I have introduced the idea of the sacrifice as a framework for viewing collective radical action; the reader might have noticed, however, a peculiarity in this usage. Generally, ‘sacrifice’ is commonly understood as the destruction of one's own property, health, or life, yet in each of these cases I have been referring to the practice whenever the inimical profane is cut away from the microcosmic social laboratory of Inex or Koko Lepo. That said, there is indeed a sense of personal loss resulting from these activities: a loss of general support, a loss of friends, a loss of peace. Each must be endured with each pass of the political knife. There proved to be little to no gain or utility in the stealing of the storage space, it was an act of sacrifice in the name of equality as imagined by the kindergarten.

As I wrote at the time to the apolitical members of the Koko Lepo collective:

> *If someone gives you a problem about this, feel free to remind them that* [Đura and his partner] *stole their private room from the common guest room,* [another 'cultural' user's] *private room was supposed to be the print shop, at least one member of the 'Artist Collective' took a room without asking anyone. The social half of Inex has always followed the decisions of the meetings and have in general played by the rules. The filthy egomaniac caste has, historically, just taken shit whenever they felt like it and used it for private purposes.*

So was the issue revenge? The revenge aspect certainly made it more fun for everyone, not in the least for the parent who suffered Đura's attack some time before. The key principle, however, was equality. While participating in the governing consensus structure of Inex, the 'cultural-users' had continued to build their structural power through the "game of spaces" outlined in my earlier chapter on InexFilm. The kindergarten collective was less interested, however, in getting the same amount of spaces that the cultural users had, but since ability was tied inexorably to space at the squat, the kindergarten's willful abilities to act and develop far outweighed its spatial capacities. To hold space meant to shape the squat, and the vast discrepancy between the holdings of the cultural-users and their contributions to the social capacities of the squat, the ratio between their consumption and their production, was unjustifiable by any political metric, especially the tripartite value metric of Koko Lepo. The cultural-users 'owned' the space, but did not use it productively, whereas the kindergarten needed the space, yet couldn't have it.

The room was appropriated in a revolutionary fashion to create equality, but since this action produced instability which denied it use value, it was made unusable, a dead apace, in true sacrificial fashion. Sacrifices of peace, civility, and even utility were made for the space's acquisition and the space itself was sacrificed for the collective's ideals. The ongoing cease-fire between the social and cultural users of the squat was sacrificed, gleefully, on the altar of equality with the residents of *Deponija* through the kindergarten program, at the very same moment as adults from the settlement had begun to see the building as their own. The incompatibility of their presence and the feeling of comfort and ownership of the all-white cultural users was made obvious by their conflation of the theft of the room and the increasing presence of 'gypsies' at Inex events. That which was profane in the macrocosm –theft, gypsies, confrontation – was here used to defend the sacred in the microcosm.

[3] A house given, a community risked: a potentially divisive solidarity through gifting

Neđmedin died on June 18, 2016. It was a Saturday, a welcomed sunny change from the days of rainfall that had preceded it and were to follow it. A group of children from the settlement had decided to go for a swim out by Ada Huja to cool off. The Danube was extra high and it is likely that Neđmedin got caught in a current too strong for him to handle. Not many things could overpower him; Neđmedin had never lost his supportive attitude despite the hardships of the *mahala* or even taking beatings from racist youth in the city. When last I had seen him, the 15-year-old boy was carrying girls who had become too tired during our hiking adventure up the very steep inclines of Kosutnjak, a sprawling urban forest in the hills. His arms were emblazoned by artful and intricate tattoos and he was among the few in his age range who felt the need to get involved in the Koko Lepo program as helper and not a consumer. I was supposed to tutor him in English at the end of the summer; he already spoke Romany and German on top of his Serbian. We in the collective had been eager for him to begin attending our regular meetings, though this would never come to pass.

Custom demands that funerals be held immediately after death. We arrived on Sunday to pay our respects and to offer the father some money to help with the funeral expenses. The mood in the settlement was bittersweet; children were happy to see their relatives who would come from far away and, despite an air of somberness that haunted the *mahala*, life went on. We found ourselves caught in a torrential downpour which, had it happened one day earlier, could have prevented this unfathomable tragedy. When the rain let up, we were finally approached by his father. I was unaware at the time, but one of our first parents in the kindergarten, Džejms, had returned to Deponija after a two-year stay in Germany. He approached me and asked if I recognized him, and admittedly I did not at first. He reminded me of his name and immediately the faces of his children leaped to mind. We spoke a little about his time in Germany and he inquired after the state of Koko Lepo. I told him we lost the squat and the kindergarten and were now looking to find a new place. He said he could help.

Having heard similar promises before, I reminded him that we are not an NGO and had no intention of taking a place legally or paying rent for a space, which was true at the time. Džejms waved his hands and said that he understood all of that and was not offering a place to rent. His former home in the *naselje* has been empty since his departure and he was willing to give it to us. We piled into his van and drove up the hill to the property which he unlocked and let us in. The space was large and already contained stoves for heating and cooking, plumbing, and the basic necessary wiring for illumination and media technology. He said it was ours for the taking but it needed renovations, which was very obviously true. The most complex job and the most urgent was the repair of the roof which had decayed during his two-year absence. The father urged us to make use of his people to do the repairs and gave us a quote that seems to us to be far too reasonable. Roof repairs began not quite two months later under his supervision. These repairs would eventually get completely out of hand and, in his eagerness to see the kindergarten unveiled before his return to Germany, he put far too much work and material into the project leaving us with a rather sizable debt to him personally. Initially thinking we've been had, we totaled-up his material costs and were assured that he, indeed, was simply overenthusiastic and had no perspective regarding our budget.

This is, of course, a clear and dramatic example of mutual aid in practice. What I wish to emphasize, however, is the radical break that the father made with extant social expectations in this grandiose act of solidarity. This was not merely an act of solidarity in our eyes, but the act itself is also value-laden within his immediate community of peers and subordinates. Džejms' active support was also a sacrifice, not just of the property that he didn't really need, but potentially also of his standing in the community. When we came to check on the progress of the labor, he warned us not to make it obvious that we, non-Roma, were the people for whom the work was being done. He had told the laborers that the work was for him and it was this relation that he was exploiting for our benefit. It should here be emphasized that none of Džejms’ children would ever be able to attend the kindergarten. They were going to move with him to Germany, though this move later proved only temporary; this act was for the continuation of the Koko Lepo project alone. For this, Džejms found himself in conflict with the normal relations of the settlement.

Džejms had married into Ibn's ruling caste. He is not well liked in the *naselje* and it can be assumed that his social standing has some effect on his workers’ willingness to meet his needs. When we arrived one day to examine the roof, he revealed to us that the police had just been in the *naselje* responding to complaints that a physical fight had broken out between Džejms and his workers. They had realized that the work was not for him but for the collective and they rebelled. They ceased working, and Džejms confronted them both verbally and physically resulting in a brief but violent conflagration. Džejms realized that his solidarity with our project, much like we realized with our solidarity to *Deponija*, was incongruous with the hegemonic culture in which he lived, disparate as it was from that of the White City. His sacrifice of the space in the name of solidarity with the Koko Lepo program condemned the petty property struggles and mutual exploitation that govern the informal living conditions of the urban collector living in *Deponija*.

From funeral aid to a donated house, Koko Lepo's intervention in the settlement is framed by the ideals of solidarity. Whereas some actions, such as supporting Neđmedin's family after a loss, were received without controversy, indicating that they gel with pre-existing ideas about the cultural place of solidarity within the *Deponija* microcosm, others show the inimical boundaries of that system. In the case of the house that was given, the father and Koko Lepo transgressed such boundaries together and as a consequence angered some, and perhaps, as was intimated Ervin upon learning of our new space and vowing that his children would not attend any kindergarten connected to Ibn's family, sacrifice the stability of some relationships in the short term. The true impact of this sacrifice, however, cannot be fully appraised; did we inadvertently elevate and purify the landowning caste's status in the *mahala* and condemn those who suffer underfoot? Or conversely, could the donation of the new kindergarten as a rent-free act of solidarity which will not be enjoyed by the children of the donor have encouraged a condemnation of the property relation itself and an uplifting of ideals of solidarity on the local level? Unfortunately, Dzejms himself was evicted from his own home after returning from Germany, so the space that would become the new kindergarten passed back into his hands. Though Koko Lepo had yet to satisfy their debt to him, his return to the property appears to have annulled that account and life continues much as before. Not quite one year later, his standing with those in the settlement to whom he is not related has not improved and a number of our parents continue to admonish us for including his larger kin group in our activities. The disharmony that erupted from the aborted transfer of this property is enough, however, to show the disruptive power that sacrificial solidarity can have in inimical social systems.

[4] Cooking with anarchists: the kids make salads for refugees

In the autumn following the closure of InexFilm, a number of the anarchists from the former infoshop, along with a smattering of other unaffiliated anti-authoritarian allies from Inex and elsewhere, decided to put together a cooking event in support of the many refugees enduring the elements in Belgrade's city parks. The members of Koko Lepo immediately decided to propose this event to their young participants in *Deponija*. It was explained to them and their parents that the older group of children, at that time between the ages of 10 and 15, would be picked up from home and transported across town to a bar/cultural center next to the Belgrade Waterfront development site in Sava Mala. The bar is a relatively hip, though vaguely left-leaning entertainment establishment along the riverside. They had agreed to host the event in their fenced-off backyard area. The anarchists would supply the food and the cooking equipment and members of Koko Lepo were tasked with purchasing the implements and vegetables for the creation of several large salads. These would be delivered alongside the mass of other foodstuffs being produced to the refugees by the end of the day.

The children were introduced to the idea for the day's activities in the settlement to ensure that no one was surprised or disappointed upon arriving at the space, a practice that had become a customary defensive maneuver on the part of Koko Lepo’s members. The kids were transported to what has come to known as 'Afghan Park' due to the prevalence of refugees. Three of the collective members asked the kids to form a circle to discuss how the day would go and what they expected from. Some of the kids understood that they were there to "help the Muslims" or "feed the Syrians" and were even basically informed about the fact that they were fleeing a war. There were a couple moments of self-reflection sparked by this fact, as many of the children knew that their own parents had arrived in Belgrade for similar reasons. The discussion proved to be a mild, however unruly, success in the eyes of the collective organizers, and the children were then led to the bar to begin preparations.

In Serbia, a common mantra among the right wing, especially their ranks among the hooligans, is the phrase "Kosovo is Serbia". This mantra has a long tradition in Belgrade and is so prevalent that few politicians have dared to exclude at least its basic sentiment from their election propaganda. For whatever reason, one of the children began chanting it in the style of a Belgrade hooligan. Almost immediately, and to the delight of the worried but bemused collective members, the phrase was immediately inverted and re-imagined in a new absurd formulation: "Serbia is Kosovo!" They continued to chant this *en masse* down the busy streets of the center of Belgrade which, given the racial and ethnic background of the kids involved, did little to ease the collective members growing sense of discomfort, even though it did fill them with a certain amount of satisfaction and amusement. The march took a turn for the surreal, however, when one of the boys went even deeper into the absurd by chanting "Spain is France!" And then "Germany is America!", etc. etc. The boisterous conviction with which these absurdities were chanted, coupled by the racial composition of the marchers as well as their young age, produced quite a spectacle in the downtown area.

Illustration 21: Making salad for refugees

Upon arriving to the bar, the children and teenagers were presented with the mass of vegetables and informed on the location of the water spigot. With almost no instruction whatsoever, the kids immediately grabbed whatever utensils they could find and began to prepare three salads as well as aid some of the non-Koko Lepo anarchists with their own cooking duties. Although the children did wash their hands, some of the anarchists from Inex expressed concern over what they saw as an enduring dirtiness of the children's fingers. A couple of the children suffer from warts, no doubt inflicted upon them by the disastrous conditions of the mahala. Though the members of the Koko Lepo collective attempted to assure them that such afflictions were not dangerous, their principal sensation was one of extreme frustration and personal offense at the complaints of the Serb and European anarchists in the space. None would claim that such concerns were entirely unfounded, but they did fall very neatly in line with similar concerns expressed even before the event by avowed anarchists about sanitation in the preparation of the food when it was revealed that the children of Deponija would be joining the operation during the planning stages. Furthermore the constant presence of chaos that surrounds the young participants of the Koko Lepo program was unnerving to many of the anarchists in attendance. Cutting boards, knives, and vegetables were passed around with little order or warning and, like many Koko Lepo events, the entire ordeal appeared to the uninitiated as some sort of barely intelligible social storm.

The cooking event, however, was considered a general success despite the shortcoming that the children were unable to deliver the food to the refugees themselves, as they had finished their part of the meal long before the other anarchists have completed their tasks. It was already growing dark, and Koko Lepo had long ago vowed not to return children to *Deponija* at night, for both real and imagined concerns of safety, and the group had to abandon its creations and entrust them to the remaining adult anarchists, much to their chagrin.

The event was itself an act of solidarity, and the discussion before the event revealed that this value was shared and understood by all those present. Parents, long after the event, commented favorably to the adults of the collective that their children enjoyed the activity and were glad that they were able to help fellow Muslims in their time of need. However, it is not difficult to see the problematic complexity in the relationship of Koko Lepo to the other groups present during the event. While the marching from the park to the bar emphasized, through the employment of absurdity, the incommensurability of the collective's mindset in relation to that of the hegemonic culture surrounding it, but they also found a negative incommensurability in their relation to those with whom they are acting in solidarity. Perfectly legitimate concerns about hygiene were interpreted by the Koko Lepo collective as personal, and possibly passively racist sentiments on the part of their allies; these statements were not forgotten for many months and were commonly invoked as a collective memory in future discussions about their anarchist allies. Values shared between both groups, namely solidarity and equality, were not held in practical equivalence in this moment and Koko Lepo's rebuttal of their allies' concerns ran the definitive risk of a permanent break in this alliance. Luckily for both groups, the general closeness in terms of organizational strategy and the practice of their shared ideals remained strong enough and historically positive to prevent a permanent schism. In Koko Lepo's value triad, accusations of dirtiness became an attack on its most sacred of totems: solidarity. Had this conflict evolved they would have been forced to isolate themselves ever further with yet another condemning severance.

Furthermore, it was clear by any and all observers that the standards for cleanliness between the two groups, Koko Lepo and the anarchists of the former squat, were incommensurable. I argue that this is due to the fact that all values, relationships, and activities are inextricably bound to Koko Lepo's tripartite standard of values. Cleanliness, a value in of itself, is held in high regard within the settlement and in the Koko Lepo collective just as it is among the anarchists of Inex or the general population of Belgrade. What is different, however, is a deeply felt connection between cleanliness and equality due to the structural conditions of Deponija; not to mention that one of the closest allies of Koko Lepo accusing them of filth was seen as nothing less than a violation, perhaps a betrayal, of the sacred value of solidarity. No such offense was meant on the part of the anarchists participating in the cooking event, but the microcosm of Koko Lepo was unable to make any other equivalent with which to weigh the anarchists' criticism.

[5] Đani and White discipline at the Bus Stop: when equality and autonomy became concrete

This vignette is about the intersection of equality and autonomy in the organizational dynamics of the kindergarten. More accurately, it is about the failure to achieve either until a key barrier was finally broken through by a young resident of Deponija. White discipline had long been an infectious presence in Koko Lepo; from Gricko's authoritarian pedagogical order to more than one “cultural” member of the collective apologizing for corporal discipline on the basis that it was “all these kinds of kids [read: 'gypsies'] understand”, the anarchist tendencies of the collective had long struggled to storm this pernicious Bastille. Even having eliminated such voices from the collective space, sacrificing them, as it were, to the sacred value structure at the collective's heart, authoritarianism survived in the passive form of race. Whiteness, that sticky combination of civilizing authoritarianism and collaboration with European separatism as theorized by historians like Noel Ignatiev, Theodore Allen, Marcus Reddiker and Peter Linebaugh, remained a powerful organizing presence in Koko Lepo. Thus, like the NGO's they defined themselves in contradistinction to, their order worked within the pre-existing racially exploitative hegemonic system they sought so earnestly to unmake. The brief but important inclusion into the collective of Đani, mentioned in the previous chapter, provided the bases of a new organizational structure within Koko Lepo that permitted a re-evaluation of its core principles through a concrete change in their organizational behavior.

On the previously mentioned excursion with the children to the cinema, myself and collective member Anastasija walked the *naselje* girls up the busy road to the Vuka Vrčevića bus stop where the *mahala* kids were waiting for us with collective members Jovana, Jovan, and Đani; after a headcount, twenty-nine in all, I introduced myself finally to Đani. He was new to the collective and our first member from *Deponija*, specifically the *mahala*. Đani, 19, speaks Arabic and German as well as Romani, Serbian, and Albanian. He claims his father was Arab and his mother is a *romkinja* from Kosovo. Đani approached the Školica crew in the middle of pick-up some weeks ago and had since become a regular member of the collective, though this regularity would fade with time. A devout Muslim, his inclusion in this motley mix of anarchists and the like proved surprisingly unproblematic. He once explained the chaotic and mean-spirited behavior exhibited by the children of the *mahala* as a consequence of their distance from the faith. As this claim had ideological relevance for the collective, I took some time in the next meeting to talk about our own ideological background. I explained to him the connection Školica has to anarchist, antifascist and punk groups, especially those in Germany. Đani asked with some trepidation and surprise if these were Nazi organizations; I, just as surprised, explained that they were in fact specifically anti-Nazi. Anti-fascist and anarchist gypsy rapper 'Skill' from the band Gypsy Mafia once explained to one of our collective members that this misconception is quite widely held among European Roma, due mostly to the militant aspect of antifascist punks and skinheads in Europe. This is no doubt reinforced by the “sense of mutual misrecognition” that has, for so many centuries, defined the relationship gypsy groups have shared with Whites in Europe (Stewart 2013).

Đani had spent his late teenage years in the Wedding district of Berlin. He speaks of this period with great excitement and nostalgia, recounting paid musical adventures in the streets and bars, as well as with a hint of guilt when recounting bold hustles on the Berlin public transportation system where he would scam locals and tourists out of their Euros by dressing up as control. He doesn't like the mahala, as few people do, and has every intention of returning to Germany someday. He currently works in a Belgrade bakery.

Đani's welcome presence in the regular collective complicated the us-and-them distinction that had, up to that point, been relatively cut and dry. This subtle dismantling of the 'white versus gypsy' problem of order in Školica has had real consequences on the class relations that plagued the program. Older children had complained at an outing to the Kalemegdan fortress park in the center of Belgrade that he was afforded total autonomy on the trips whereas they, five years younger, had to stay with the others. It was explained to them that Đani was there to work as a member of the collective and his job, like the rest of us, was to organize and care for them. This appeared to satisfy the young teens and a month later, some of these same kids would be volunteering themselves as guardians of the younger students, five years their junior, on future trips. It seemed at this point as if Đani's embeddedness at a racial critical junction created a space for the resolution of several enduring contradictory dynamics in the collective. He lessened the association of authority in the collective with race, and therefore simultaneously created a space for the increased autonomy of the participants by their collaboration in the function of the collective, even if they were not 'of age', envisaged as it was by the collective's adult members. A few weeks after that excursion, two twelve-year-old boys from the mahala and one fifteen-year-old would attend one of the collective's meetings as active participants. They remarked on the sociopolitical divisions in the settlement, contributed their thoughts on the prevailing issues of gender inequality therein, and helped to plan the next outing. This proved to be a watershed moment in the program and prefigured future experiments in youth-led organizing.

Before Đani, the authority of the collective members over the young participants in the program was reinforced by race. This was a class division; power in a system of management determined by structural inequities and reinforced through a regime of top-down discipline of which the recipients were entirely dispossessed. These were integrated but opposed interests, each trying to direct the flow of value towards different ends: the vision of order and progress on the part of the collective members versus a desire for freedom and a break from family surveillance on the part of the students.

As I will elaborate in later chapters and have already broached in the previous section, the 'gypsies' of Deponija experience race through their material conditions as collectors and the social dispossession that is reproduced, not only through general cultural estrangement, but through administrative fiat; police, principles, civil servants, etc. all glowering at them through white masks concealing centuries of class formation culminating in the establishment of nationalism and race. We collective members contributed to this hegemonic articulation of class via race in our own struggle for control. It might be objected, however, that our ends were not the maximization of surplus but rather the success of each day and longevity of the program. Benevolent as our intentions might have been, they nonetheless reproduced much of the same relations we sought to combat. Race underwrote our authority and, much like capitalism and the State underwriting an NGO, constrained our potential to revolutionize the relations of our social production by situating the mechanics of that production – the way we established our program – within the narrow architecture of race; we ruled because we were White; because we were ruled, we were White. We unwittingly and paradoxically used control to seek autonomy, and because of this our successes were meager. Since Đani came, and truly even after his apparent departure, new pathways to autonomy and order have become available that have replaced old hierarchies and control tactics.

Returning to the Vuka Vrčevića stop, our new comrade from Deponija asked if I needed help keeping order as we prepared the kids to load the crowded number 23 bus. I didn't understand the significance of that question until later, and I arrogantly told him, “I got it,” and set about solving a problem of control that collective member Jovana had warned me about five minutes earlier. Two boys had followed the group intending to join us in the cinema, the only problem being that they had already been told they were not allowed due to their behavior at the last outing. I had never met these boys before and I wasn't at the excursion in question; nonetheless, I took it upon myself to confront them and keep them from boarding the bus. Jovana had warned me that they might put up a violent resistance, so I resolved to be as non-physical as possible. Kneeling down to their level, without anything by way of introduction, I told the boys that I heard what they did at the last event and that they must understand that they can't join us. The older boy, a child of about ten years, tried denying the ordeal while the younger one spat at the ground and swore with violent indignation. Behind me, the rest of the group loaded onto the bus and departed, leaving me and the troublesome two behind.

What felt in that moment like a success was in fact very far from it. They listened to me without knowing who I was because I carried tokens of value that I was able to exchange for authority, one of which being race. Here I was, one more white face guarding the gates of the White City. At the borders of their world and mine, I engendered a passage into another realm of authority, one overseen, as much in our anarchistic collective as in the government office, by white people who do not speak their language but whose language these two must speak. The power to discipline is simultaneously the power to represent. I wasn't present for their crime, yet I was endowed with the authority to respond to it. Happily, as the collective continued to move more towards an actively integrated autonomy with a radical understanding of equality and away from a racially-segregated control apparatus, moments like these have became increasingly infrequent and are often carried out by the children themselves with no officially designated authority present.

[III/C] Stealing from the free shop

Gifting, hierarchy, and the social politics of theft had profound effects on how Koko Lepo structured our relation to Deponija

Stealing from the Free Shop: how Koko Lepo learned to fear the gift

Before Koko Lepo considered itself in terms of values, it saw itself as an amalgam of tactics. These included consensus, addressed in chapter one, and ‘mutual aid’. The real difference between mutual aid and charity, however, were never clearly defined until the Inex Free Shop experiment had failed. In short, Koko Lepo found it impossible to enact solidarity from a hierarchically superior position relative to the distribution of resources. To this day, the lessons learned from this period are still referred to as cautionary reminders of how fragile the relations of solidarity can be when met by the materiality of precariousness.

The InexFilm Free Shop: year one and only

The Inex free shop was an unevenly applied attempt to work a common anarchist template into the social activism of the Inex squat. It was supplied primarily through donations from a few German antifascist groups close to the Koko Lepo collective and random individual contributions from locals and visitors to the squat. In its final form, the free shop was displayed at certain events in the *Furija* infoshop or set-up outside by the squat's lounge. Free to be taken or added to, it mostly offered clothing along with a smattering of household items and crafts in good condition. Offerings ranged from colorful hand-stitched tobacco bags left by a particularly artistic guest to new brand name woman's slacks with a 190 euro price tag still attached. Given the demands of the ever-increasing presence of Syrian and Afghan refugees in Belgrade over the last two years, the free shop was shuttered and all of its holdings were transferred to autonomous aid efforts in the parks where refugees commonly gathered. As far as I can verify, the immediate predecessor to the existing Inex free shop was in an anarchist squat named *Krš* which burned down in 2011. The current operators of the Inex free shop have only weak ties to the *Krš* project and no ties to its free shop, neither did the

Inex shop's probable founder. The current Inex free shop should only loosely be considered an inheritance of a local tradition due to its lack of connection to the Krš precedent, much less with *Krš*'s own possible inspiration in the long defunct *Stani Pani* anarchist collective of Belgrade.

Its eventual mobile incarnation was a final attempt at a solution to a year long failed experiment. Originally, the free shop consisted of a couple of hanging racks and a rickety bamboo shelving unit in the hallway in front of the squat's kitchen. While a little inconvenient for the flow of the passageway, its proximity to the storage room where the bulk of items for both the free shop and the kindergarten were kept made maintenance and restocking very easy. At this point, there was no particular working group operating the free shop; one day it was there, another it was gone. It was up to the individual interest of whomever to keep it out and operational. Eventually, the storage room became established as the ‘official’ storehouse for the kindergarten's supplies; and since it was mostly anarchists from the kindergarten collective who were operating the free shop, it too found a more-or-less permanent home amid the clutter of puzzle-pieces, toys and children shoes in the storage room.

Originally, the free shop was in passive service to the predominantly cosmopolitan and Serbian guests and members of the Inex Squat, but the success of the autonomous kindergarten downstairs began to radically alter the socioeconomic character of Inex. Unfortunately, this success was tainted by a charismatic egoist named Gricko who helped found the program and whose impact can still be felt long after his eventual exile. Through a complex combination of charismatic misogyny, gift-giving, and conspicuous charitable labor, the kindergarten was very much under his authoritarian thumb. His reign was characterized by a sort of tactical looseness wherein the seemingly simple joys of free charitable giving to the children and parents of the kindergarten belied and fueled a deeply entrenched personal authority which, following Freddy Perlman, one could only describe as 'egocratic', charismatic rule through the guarded possession of 'the idea' and its authenticity. While the numerous and practices and strictures developed through this egocracy are the subject of a previous chapter, one in particular is vital to understand when considering the fate of the Inex free shop: the gift.

Completely ignoring the oft-quoted warnings of Peter Freuchen's Eskimo informants that “by gifts one makes slaves”, myself and the rest of the kindergarten collective regularly gave clothes, toys, and supplies to the children of the kindergarten, to their parents, and to anyone else from the slum who might be in need of something. The logic back then was simple: we have it, they need it, they should have it. While it occurred to us that some of the recipients of these items might be selling them for personal profit later, to us it made no difference. Indeed, this transition from gift to market is already well-theorized in the literature. Anna Tsing's (2015) breakthrough work on the gift relation at the center of the matsutake mushroom trade empowers a simple critique of the free shop form insomuch as it might exist alongside a thriving resale economy. There is nothing inherent in the gift form, Tsing's research suggests, that makes it incompatible with market exchanges; in fact, both the market and gift forms of exchange appear to enhance the value realized for objects in each relation when they combine. It is extremely likely that the kindergarten's naïve and freewheeling approach to gifting supplied at least one flea market in Belgrade with a little boost in commercial value. This easy transformation from gift into commodity proved to be an insurmountable contradiction for the Inex free shop project.

The free shop, having been relocated into the storage room with the kindergarten surplus, began to lose definition. The storage room was now both storage and free shop. Without a discrete functional personality, the operation became increasingly cluttered and kindergarten property started to bleed into free-shop offerings both physically and in our imagination. This was intensified by the increasing habit of families coming to Inex in search of Gricko to give them "*stvari*" (stuff) from the storage room. As I understood this period, the idea of the 'free shop' as a discrete operation was totally unknown to the gypsy visitors and even for the longtime guests and residents of Inex it became an increasingly opaque abstraction. What was becoming clear, however, is that the slow disappearance of the free shop and its replacement as a source of gifts to the residents of *Deponija* coincided perfectly with the cementing of Gricko's authority as leader of the kindergarten collective, at least as far as the slum was concerned.

Internally, the kindergarten collective was confronting Gricko about his normative misogyny, discussed elswhere in this dissertation. Having failed to correct this yet still lacking the consensus needed to kick him out on his ass, the anarchist bloc of the kindergarten collective was forced to continue to work with him, though with a much sharper gaze. Suddenly, the candies he pocketed on his way to the settlement were now suspicious and possible causes for alarm, so a couple of us committed to being present at all times when Gricko was working to keep tabs on his shady antics. The message to the people of *Deponija* at this point became entirely clear: Gricko was the father, the giver, the owner. The free shop was gone and Gricko's increased attention to helpful manual labor inside the settlement, even with former enemies of the kindergarten, fell in line symbolically with the bags of clothing he would pack from the storage room and with his sticky denim pockets. When Gricko finally started to call in his debts in the settlement, he cemented his ignoble exit from the collective and this study. He allegedly sexually molested a kindergarten parent immediately after giving her several plastic bags full of clothing for her and her children. She spoke out against him, luckily, and with this testimony we were able to achieve the consensus needed for his dismissal. While the king was finally dead, the negative effects of his 'egocratic' gift economy were only just becoming apparent.

As Graeber, writing after Sahlins, rightly argues, the hierarchy of gifting is a perennial weed (Graeber 2014:109). Its first blossoming took the form of a man from the settlement who was not, at that time, a kindergarten parent. Let's call him Elvis. He was aware that Gricko and others in our collective, myself included, were giving people things from Inex and, now that Gricko wasn't coming around anymore, Elvis thought he would come directly. Since we had, up to that point, been tying the distribution of goods to the slum with diplomatic efforts to interest parents in the kindergarten project, I brewed him some coffee and explained what he could and could not liberate from the storage room. I also pointed out the hallway free-shop which he examined carefully before choosing a few items. In the storage room, however, Elvis tore through bags and stuffed anything resembling children's clothing into as many sacks as he could carry. We exchanged names and I reminded him that all those toys in the bag were included in the "don't take these" category. He handed me the bag and went home with the rest with nary a sip of his coffee.

No less than an hour later, a handful of older kids came from the slum explaining that they had seen Elvis and his loot and they wanted the same. I ran through the same schtick with them and they too went home with a few bags of clothes after I reclaimed some more kindergarten-destined items from their take. A day later, Elvis was back, and he emptied the storage room once more leaving behind plastic table legs, a pile of unsorted school supplies, and whatever miscellaneous clothing items that didn't catch his eye, giving the space the vague impression of an unlucky toy store after a hurricane. Apparently, he had used our names with the artist residents of Inex to get into the storage room. One of our teachers went to his house to confront him. Before and after this original theft from the free shop, the reader ought to imagine a continuous smattering of requests for *stvari* bubbling from the parents and their assorted relations slowly intensifying. This was punctuated by occasional 'thefts' of scrap metal from Inex, much to the resident artists' chagrin and about which the kindergarten collective was expected to take responsibility. Increasingly we found ourselves laying down rules and strictures to each parent and youth that would show up on Inex's doorstep, mostly to placate tensions with the 'artists'. Slowly we built our pyramid of repressive authority and surveillance.

Illustration 22: Donations from Schwäbisch Gmünd filling the kindergarten

These conditions necessitated a re-imagining of the free shop. One day, several people from the settlement, including, for the first time, some of our own students, followed Elvis' lead once again and ransacked the storage room, which, by this time even we had stopped referring to as a free shop. This resulted in a dramatic confrontation in the slum ending with two of our teachers receiving tearful apologies and even some portion of the missing items as recompense. They explained, albeit in a less diplomatic tone than had once characterized this dialogue, that this was kindergarten property and was to be used for the benefit of the program. They reiterated that no-one in the kindergarten works for money or profit and that without this stuff, the program could not function. The *stvari* was re-personalized in this moment and the collective ceased to be seen in the settlment as another NGO. We decided after this to stop supplying the settlement with *stvari* because the relationship thus formed was preventing anything resembling solidarity with the settlement from flourishing. Unfortunately, it was shortly thereafter that our antifascist comrades in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany dropped off a shockingly comprehensive solidarity donation including a great mass of adult clothes along with goods appropriate for children. It was here that the idea for a free shop returned as a curative for the hierarchically charitable disorder the kindergarten had contracted in its relations to the settlement.

Caroline Humphrey has convincingly argued that the incommensurability of values cloistered in separate worlds vaccinates social groups against inter-cultural hierarchy and potentially state control (2015:303); the rebirth of the free shop supports this thesis. At the end of the Summer, the small new free shop collective debuted the new system at a weekly infoshop dining event. We organizers considered it a modest success and the kindergarten was no longer a hub for the distribution of goods, only the free operation of the autonomous classroom. From that point to its abandonment, no one from the settlement was aware of the free shop as it was now doubly cloistered inside the specifically anarchist events of the infoshop and the less-than-public space of the guest room. Sadly, the free shop did not survive long enough to see the increased integration of Deponija residents into the social fabric of the squat as users, covered at the end of this chapter. Despite some threats to the contrary, none of the parents pulled their children from the kindergarten after being informed that it no longer doubled as a clothing distributor. The confrontation in the settlement after the final 'theft' largely ended requests in naselje for stvari and the program continued and evolved in the settlement with far greater clarity and no loss of support.

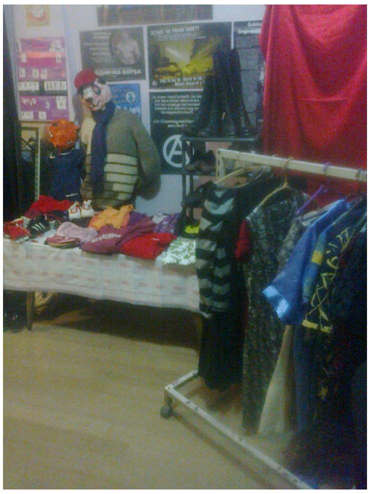
Illustration 23: Free shop reboot inside the infoshop

For its part in the continuation of its communist directionality, the kindergarten continued to distribute basic necessities to the children – some school supplies, shoes, slippers, winter gear, etc. – insomuch as these items advanced the mutual cause of the kindergarten itself. These were not gifts, but the material bases of a common effort. In the twilight of the kindergarten, it became increasingly common, though still generally exceptional, for parents themselves to offer things to the program such as toys or snacks sent with the children, understanding that these were to be shared with the other students. Note, these were not gifts to we the teachers like the coffees and foodstuffs that Gricko once received during the height of the gifting period, but donations to the kids in the program as a whole. Furthermore, parents would occasionally offer rides to or from the kindergarten in the backs of their home-made tractor-pulled wagons built for urban collecting. The most important contribution and sign of solidarity on the part of the parents, however, was the giving of the children themselves. Overcoming entirely justifiable instincts of mistrust and isolation, parents repeatedly made the conscious decision to include their children in the program long after the free shop/storage room was closed to the general public. Requests for *stvari* transformed into welcome constructive criticisms of the program: “Why don't you teach them German?” or “Abdul still doesn't know how to spell his name!”. The parents were no longer recipients of hierarchically controlled aid, but increasingly became agents in the evaluation of the program itself.

Stealing from the free shop?

So, how do projects founded on the principles and practices of communism, mutual aid, and solidarity allow for the concept of theft? Even when the items in the free shop/storage room were intended for free distribution to whomever might need them, especially the residents of *Deponija*, how is it possible that we felt robbed when Elvis made good on this intention? Discrete concepts of communism, mutual aid, and solidarity are necessary to show that the existence of the common good, and hence of communism, is established or obliterated at several critical junctions where the prescriptive social experiment meets its inimical host system. Without solidarity, aid slips easily into private interest, profit, and hierarchy. Communism is, at its heart, a political project; without solidarity, there is no communism.

Deponija is not exactly a bastion of solidarity. Not totally unlike the houses of my childhood suburb in Texas, most of the families in the slum see themselves as islands in a potentially hostile social archipelago. This feeling is justified all too often. Belgrade ethnologist and former colleague in the collective Milos Zaric discovered that many households lacked sufficient medical care merely because they were unwilling to leave their houses for fear of someone else in the settlement breaking in and robbing them. Furthermore, when one of our long-time parent participants brought home supplies from the storage room for her temporary shelter with her children away from her abusive husband, the neighborhood reaction was not one of solidarity with the brave mother making a stand for her family in the face of great precarity, but was rather one of indignation that their own families weren't offered bags of goods. When the NGOs and churches come to *Deponija* with *paketici*, little gifts, they distribute them totally and exhaustively; what kind of an NGO were we? As I mentioned, the decision to end the gift relationship was quickly followed by a general understanding in the settlement that we were not another NGO.

Having said this, I feel compelled to qualify this statement with the admission that these observations were acquired quite early in the fieldwork process. Later, it would be revealed that small-scale acts of mutual aid and micro expressions of solidarity are in fact present in *Deponija*, though not readily apparent on first sight. Mutual aid, for instance, was undoubtedly the basis of the piecemeal financial support many women on the edge of the *naselje* provided to their oldest resident, as I discuss in earlier chapters. Likewise, solidarity was the principle force behind Deni demanding I release a particularly problematic child during an early excursion in the Koko Lepo youth program, a child he is unrelated to and to whom he is more often bully than friend. My point, however, is to say that solidarity and mutual aid are rarely present in the form of grand gestures nor overt expressions of 'normal' relations.

Following this normative competitiveness, the storage room free shop, for the brief time it existed in this world, was not apparently viewed as a source of common welfare, but at best an inexplicable supply of trade-able goods to build private funds for the family or the self. It is no accident that when Elvis, who took the most in the way of childrens' toys and clothes from the free shop and who frets endlessly and over the safety of his children, finally committed two of his sons to the kindergarten, they came in ratty hand-me-downs and without sufficient footwear. Clean items of good repair can be sold. He cannot, however, trade clothes for food or for the legal address he rents from Ibn nor for the repairs to the tractor with which he will start his urban recycling venture, but he can trade them for cash and cash is life. It would be impractical, even shameful in *Deponija* at this point in our embryonic relationship *not* to steal from the free shop.

After the free shop had been fully separated from the kindergarten and sequestered behind ideologically reinforced doors, the kindergarten was able to continue as a fully communist mutual aid program based exclusively on solidarity. This was not possible under its former conditions. The kindergarten continued to distribute necessary items to the children on certain occasions, but only when it supported the operation of the kindergarten. The free shop, in turn, was tied more overtly to anarchist politics and organization and so joined more securely the symbolic order of solidarity as an independent mutual aid system promoting communism *ideologically* as well as materially.

Theft, Personalized Property, and Solidarity

Proudhon's immortal dictum, “property is theft”, is a fine punctuation to the year-long sentence of the Inex Free Shop. The free shop stole items from the relations of capitalism, making them collective property or 'commons' in accordance with our experimental needs, while a number of our friends in the *naselje* tried to steal them back in accordance with the dictates of survival, making them commodified private property. In the action of moving collectively available goods into permanent personal use, the free shop was not diminished, simply used. When the goods are taken from the free shop and returned to the market through resale, the social relation embodied by the goods become radically inimical to their intended form. This must be regarded as 'theft' because the shoes would be taken at the expense of the free shop – at the expense of the project of the commons. The free shop is a product/producer of solidarity with the communist imaginary in the form of a mutual aid project.

Theorizing theft is theorizing property as a social relation. In a previous chapter, I showed how InexFilm conflicts with or fits into various conceptions of property, especially the “fuzzy” relations Verdery identifies as characteristic of post-socialist States undergoing privatization. I also showed how various conflicting ideas about property vied for territory within the squat which were predictably in line with the ideologies of their representatives. Here I would like to elucidate in greater detail the specific anthropological niceties of the theft-act as a special object of study itself against the case of the free shop thefts.

Caroline Humphrey, in her studies of herders in Post-Soviet Mongolia recalls an interesting conversation in which her sheep-herding informants reminisce about the prevalence, or lack thereof, of theft before the rise of the State:

> We used to leave our tents unlocked and all our property unguarded for days. The only danger was from professional horse thieves...Otherwise there was complete trust...This mistrust started with collectivization in the early 1960s. As you know, virtually all our property, all our herds, all things like buildings, cars, and machinery, were taken over by the state. And that was all right to steal. It was 'ownerless property,' as we used to say. Even religious people somehow did not blame a person who took things from the state. In fact, almost everyone did it if they could get away with it. (2002:160)

Humphrey goes on to call this relation of property “depersonalized” meaning that the “relation between people and things was conditional” (161). This conception is extremely salient here. While the free shop was certainly not State property, it was, at first, depersonalized. It had no owner and therefor its theft had no moral consequence. However, when the Koko Lepo collective went into the settlement and made a personal entreaty to the people there to cease ransacking the storage room, much of the property was returned with penitent tears and, in fact, the thefts stopped completely. However, this merely re-personalized the items, making them no more the carriers of communism than they were when they were stolen.

Humphrey also points out that the “professional horse thieves” mentioned by her informant were people who had to have come from a long way away. The thief had to live far enough away from its victim for the theft to have no social consequences; the victim was as depersonalized as the property (162). As Nicholas Herriman (2006) emphasizes, theft is a key force in the emic distribution of insider/outsider status. His work in Indonesia highlights the complex ritual and semantic responses to “missing” things in his Javanese village. Kin, the most common culprits in any given theft, were never publicly accused of their transgressions despite the unspoken knowledge of their guilt. Instead, thefts were more commonly ascribed to a vague category of “other people” or even sorcery (6). Stealing and other-ness are tightly integrated; to steal means to Other. Koko Lepo ceased to be “game-able” and started to be seen as provisionally integrated into the settlement precisely at the moment when we confronted the residents about their relationship with the storage room free shop and decided, internally, to stop mixing the distribution of *stvari* with the kindergarten program.

Theft proved in the first instance emphasized the outsider status of our collective relative to the settlement yet in “the aluminum can incident” recounted in chapter one, as well as the claiming of Đura’s room for the collective described later in this chapter, we see how similar circumstances with a different directionality managed to draw us both together. Theft defined the social value of the property, and in doing so, defined the social value of the people connected to that property in one way or another. When the stuff in the storage room was seen as depersonalized property, we were in turn depersonalized and made almost State-like through a sudden proliferation of repressive surveillance techniques as the ultimate holders of non-owned property. When it was re-personalized, requests for *stvari* almost dropped off completely and Inex instead became a source of recyclable cans and disused metal. This material shift in interests and resources created the space for a new relationship of negative reciprocity with 'the artists' against whom 'the anarchists' could join alongside 'the gypsies' in solidarity.

No communism for the precariat?

The uncomfortable question is finally posed, “Does the failure of the Inex free shop imply that communism does not work for the most precarious among us?” Certainly not. As I have shown, the removal of the free shop from the world of *Deponija* did nothing to interrupt the communist practices of the Koko Lepo kindergarten, the efforts of which only expanded and evolved with the support of the settlement. It did however, prove the necessity of solidarity as a precondition for the evolution of mutual aid into communism. Moreover, it calls into question the applicability of some forms of material aid in the light of prevailing economic practices and power systems 'on the ground'. Without attending to the cultural value of the goods held 'in common', in this case the resalable items seen as potential incomes by our friends in *Deponija* as opposed to the use-value and socializing potential that we saw in them, the free shop widened and deepened the divisions between the families of the settlement instead of uniting them in a common resource. In order for the free shop to produce a communistic effect between Inex and the *naselje*, one would first have to either reduce the material paucity of the settlement as a whole, thus the pitched competition for limited resources that pits each house-turned-cottage industry against the other, or establish shared agreements about the use of such a space, as some respondants in the above international survey of free shops attempted to do.

Furthermore, theft appears as a metric of the weakness solidarity bonds between groups, but also is a key medium over which relations of hierarchy and exploitation are expressed. The relations of charitable giving are proven to be innately hierarchical by the presence of theft, an act which illuminates the hidden relations of inequity at its heart. The free shop, as a project of mutual aid, was unable to produce a relationship of solidarity with *Deponija*, but it was able to practice mutual aid on the basis of solidarity once it was attached to the explicitly political programs of the infoshop. That the free shop failed to produce communism in its connection with *Deponija* despite the kindergarten’s success in the same effort speaks only to the centrality of solidarity, in the Prodhounian sense, in absolute contradistinction to the perennial hierarchy of the gift. That which appears as a signifier of mutuality and solidarity between relative equals, i.e., the 'white' users of the squat's political program, becomes vaguely nepotistic act of gifting when overlaid onto a preexisting racialized relationship of hierarchy. Unable to see our own class position, we were unable to prevent the reproduction of naïve paternalism, which remained shrouded in its sinister invisibility until acts of theft brought it into the harshest of light.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have depicted the Koko Lepo collective, the principal site of intervention that bridged the heterotopia of InexFilm to the Deponija slum, as a complex ethnographic subject. This chapter began with a historical account of the kindergarten program and the autonomous youth program called 'Školica', as well as an analysis of the latter as a “molecular storm system” with in the Belgrade urban landscape. This chapter presents the collective as a social laboratory and makes the argument that the Koko Lepo microcosm engenders a radical severance from the hegemonic macrocosm of neoliberal Belgrade, while nonetheless building a critical and invasive bridge back into it. I have identified the key values central to the collective laboratory: equality, solidarity, and autonomy, and have claimed that they embody a sort of totem of practice and relations. Koko Lepo, operating from these principles, unites ideals to actions which congeal into shared tokens of memory and carefully maintained relationships. To this end, I have taken care to establish a theoretical framework for approaching 'value' as a subject in of itself, emphasizing its creative, as well as destructive and sacrificial natures. Incommensurability has a central role in this story, as realized through acts of social severance and condemnation on the part of the collective. I have supported my assertions about the collective with five episodes from my fieldwork that expose these processes and struggles within the collective (episode 1), between the collective and InexFilm (episode 2), between supporters of the collective in *Deponija* and others therein (episode 3), between the collective, including the kids themselves, and the anarchists of Belgrade (episode 4), and between the adult collective members and the children and teens of the program (episode 5). Finally, I narrated the failed experiment in communism that was the Inex free shop, arguing that the hierarchy of gifting precluded solidarity and opened the door to thefts that exacerbated the distance between the collective and the people of Deponija. I wish the reader to juxtapose the organizational mission and development of Koko Lepo to the struggles in the now-defunct Inex hetereotopia and the harsh social world of the Deponija slum. As a messily-honed tool of social intervention, Koko Lepo exists in a constant state of beginning, each event replete with chaotic liminality that recombine the collective in ever evolving ways.

Illustration 24: Headed home...

Concluding remarks

About a year after I joined Koko Lepo, there were a couple of months when I seriously considered abandoning this dissertation. I don’t mean that I considered returning to my original topic, an eight-year factory occupation by workers in Zrenjanin, I mean that I thought about disappearing from academia altogether, damn the consequences. I could not see a way through my newfound obsessive commitment to my collective and to the families of Deponija and what appeared to me to be an inevitable betrayal of their trust in the form of a truncated representation of their struggles with my own name plastered all over it. I realize that this must be a common feeling among my activist colleagues working in anti-authoritarian milieus, but the idea that I wasn’t alone in this made it all the more difficult to justify my path. Surely, those of a mind like my own could band together, cast off the suffocating cloak of institutional legitimacy and make a run for the hills! We could spend our days re-learning to put hammer to nail, to code, to write fanzines without attributing authorship and scam photocopy centers for whatever costs we couldn’t meet with benefit concerts. After all, it worked for Inex, didn’t it? For CrimethInc.? For the YPG? A pirate’s life for me!

So why, then, was I spending days at a time arguing for the scientific method and the anthropological gaze to my anarchist comrades? How could it be that I was finding more explanatory value in the apolitical musings of Edmund Leach than in the revolutionary prose of Guy Debord in conceiving of my collective’s power? As I reached deeper and deeper into the bewildering unknown of autonomous mutual aid, crushing precarity, and radical direct action, I kept feeling the familiar texture of anthropological theory and ethnographic techniques of knowing. I remembered that E. Evans-Prichard joined the military as an excuse to get back to Sudan where he organized an anti-fascist resistance with his informants. I read that Leach organized guerrillas in the Kachin highlands at a time when over 57,000 of his countrymen and those of his informants died together in the battle for Burma. I felt a powerful affinity with the Boasians who kept Nazi race politics at bay in the US, with Max Gluckman sticking his critical nose into apartheid, with Michael Taussig unabashedly linking capitalism to local ideas of the ‘evil’, etc. etc. etc.… Anthropology is continually reborn under conditions of shared struggles and violence. Of all the social sciences, it is anthropology that asks us touch the oily pitch of our blackest inhumanity without shuddering or averting our eyes. Groping about in its morass, we find the bones of those who came before us, we mark their last fateful steps, and upon it we write their epitaph, “Here lies another forgotten truth that has been buried under centuries of civilized brutality!” Anthropology doesn’t need to justify the current state of affairs; it needs no rational actor theory, no invisible hand of the market, and no divine will to account for itself. What anthropology needs are voices, acts, and moments of rupture. All I have done in my moral return to home to the discipline is bring the tools and techniques of rupture back with me; I have made a case for direct action as a form of ethnographic intervention.

Koko Lepo, a collective tool of rupture that I helped to build, was the basis of my intervention as an ethnographer in Belgrade. Instead of groping about in obsidian waters of strange cultures, I tied my rope to a tunnel boring machine and flew downward until striking that which is truly unbreakable; human agency in the super-periphery of power. We got so many things wrong together. We hurt each other, we disappointed the most deserving of children, we sowed seeds of distrust and conflict, we swallowed the venomous hatred of fellow *beograđani*, we broke friendships, and we chose sides. We cleaned circumcision blood from our walls, dog blood from our floors, noseblood from our shirts, and rinsed piss, shit, and ash from our shoes and pantcuffs. Those things we got right, however, made us better people, better activists, and more cognizant of the world we endure together. Find me a public policy doctoral student that can say the same! I’ll wait.

So now the research ends, officially anyway, and I deposit my work in the sacred burial grounds called the university library in the hopes that another like me comes along looking to dirty their hands and worry their parents. Should that person be you, and should you make it this far, find a lonely corner of the library where you won’t disturb the very important studies of our dying world’s future leaders and whisper my work’s epitaph aloud:

> Once, ‘gypsies’ and ‘anarchists’ found one another in a nihilistic space of exile in Belgrade, Serbia. The former wore holes in their shoes, and then grew callouses on their feet, and then built vehicles from scrap metal and blowtorch to gather enough detritus together to keep afloat in cannibal sea of capitalism. The latter willfully jumped ship, bringing whatever materials they could pilfer from their bosses, bankers, and universities to build a pirate vessel all of their own. At first, the pirates took pity on the lowly collectors and tried to gift a bit of their sea to them. Little did they realize, however, that they were recreating the very world they’d just retreated from, replicating the iniquitous relationships and egoistic values therein, and so they vowed to finally sever themselves utterly from the moral world that created them and turn violently against it. Instead of giving space, they began to take it; instead of asking for recognition, they began to work in illegibility and silence. I was, and am today, one of their crew, and it is with the greatest humility and gratitude that I share what we built together, we and the collectors, with you the reader. “This World of Impotent Men”, to return one final time to Leach, has built temples to the transcendent violence of objective research and political non-engagement. However, I urge you, reader, to sever This Word from yours by sacrificing the sacred distance between the knower and the known to the immanent violence of direct action. Counterfactual anthropology is the knowledge of

> "Experienced Reversed", the known becomes the knower, the subaltern speaks, and she does so through conflict, struggle, and rupture.

Had I not already identified with anarchism before beginning this study, I would have to admit at least some sympathies for it now. The World of Experience Reversed that I have had the great honor of creating in Koko Lepo has helped me unearth the concrete limits of what those with something to lose like to call "culture" or "nation", and my training in ethnographic knowledge production and the anthropological sensitivities granted me by my comrades and professors has opened up a holistic avenue for following what lies beneath to those who stand above. I return now to Belgrade to continue the fights, the thefts, and the sacrilege as we form new bonds that rupture and new ruptures that bond. If anarchism will remain one of Koko Lepo's guiding trajectories, it will be the anarchism of anthropology.

Appendix I: Pronunciation guide

In general, Serbian is pronouced as it reads on the page, one must only know these consonants:

Č č – [/tʃ/] – a hard “ch” sound as in “charm”

Ć ć – /tɕ/ – a lighter dental “ch” as in the British English pronunciation of “tube”

Đ đ – [/dʑ/] – softer, like the first consonant in the name “Jim”, sometimes written “dj”

Dž dž – [/dʒ/] – harder, like the first consonant in the drink “Gin”

Š š – [/ʃ/] – a “sh” sound as in “shame”

J j – [/j/] – a “y” sound as in “yes”

Ž ž – [/ʒ/] – the soft sound in the middle of the word “pleasure”

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